CŒLEBS DECEIVED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"AN ANTIDOTE TO THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE,"

"COTTAGE SKETCHES," &c. &c.

"I see that all are wand'rers, gone astray
"Each in his own delusions; they are lost
"In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
"And never won."

COWPER.

VOL. I.

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Advertisement.

The favourable notice which this little work has already received, first from the Editors of the Christian Miscellany, and next from the numerous readers of their valuable publication, has induced the Author to venture on a wider circulation.

The original plan of the work, in which the Hero of the tale was made to speak for himself, is not altered, as the writer conceives that method of narration appears the most easy and natural; in which opinion it is hoped, the generality of the readers will unite, as also in the leading principles and sentiments of the work itself.

INTRODUCTION.

"Pish!" cries a good old gentleman in spectacles, a candle in one hand held close under his eyes, and the Philanthropic Gazette in the other, "here is another of these religious Novels advertised. Ah, what would our pious forefathers of the sixteenth century have said to the levity of this age? Shame on the public taste to encourage thus the vain sallies of imagination. Such works deserve *to be burnt by the common hang-man.* What are you at boy?" added he, as he glanced at his tall grandson marching towards the fire, and pretending to cast therein one of his best bound books which lay on the table. "I am only, Sir," replied the youth, "going to sacrifice old John Bunyan, as the ring-leader of this set of authors." "Thou art a shrewd lad," cries the Old Gentleman, "let John Bunyan alone; and here take the purchase-money for the new book."

"Cœlebs Deceived," exclaims a Bachelor, just verging on his seventieth year. "I like that title, a satire on the female world no doubt. Yes, yes, deceived in women; I will purchase, for I have been deceived too."

The learned Reviewer reads the title-page—"Was ever any thing so provoking," says he, "we exhausted all our critical venom on the last Cœlebs, where shall we find more to pour upon this?" "Take comfort," replies a brother Critic, "a book unread does not preclude hope; perhaps there is less religion about the new Cœlebs; and then it will not be our duty to cry out *Caveat eruptor*."

"Now, pray Papa, don't order this new book," cries Miss ——, just returned from school, "for, indeed, I thought the last Cœlebs so dull and grave, that he gave me the vapours, and I only finished reading him because you desired me." "You grieve me, my dear child, by your remark; but, indeed, I must order the book for the sake

of the name, for liking the elder Cœlebs so well, I wish to invite the younger from respect."

"My charming girl," cries the Captain, to his inamorata, "what are you poring over to-day? Heigh-day,

"Cœlebs again returning into life;
"What, is he mad, or has he lost his wife?"

"What sweet impromptus you make," returned his fair friend, "I was so curious to know whether it was the same moral monster re-entering, that I lost no time in sending for the book."

"My dear," says the village Curate, just issuing from his school-room, fatigued both in mind and body, "I wish you would send for the new Cœlebs, I cannot study my next Sunday's discourse, and you know you transcribed so much matter from the last Cœlebs, as served me for three months." "Most willingly, my love," returned his obliging partner, "and really these publications are of inestimable value to you no leisure divines!"

"Works of imagination," observes a grave Physician, returning from a visit to an hypochondriac patient, "serve to dissipate the corroding maladies which might end our hopes in this life, as well as our patient's; by all means purchase the new book for Mr. ——, it may prolong his existence through the next dreaded November."

"Does this new book treat of any new methods of deception? *I query*," says the young Attorney, "if so, it behoves me to be made acquainted with them in order to guard myself." "And it behoves me still more," returned his Client, "if any more discoveries in the art of deception are about to be made known to your fraternity—we must both purchase."

"This Author would make a good tradesman," observes the London Citizen, "for having as yet little credit of his own, he continues to build on the good name of his well-established predecessor. I'll purchase the book in the hope of gaining some useful hint."

Thus Cœlebs anticipates a general welcome, and he will immediately enter on the delightful task of reciting his history and opinions.



CŒLEBS DECEIVED.

CHAP. I.

THAT egotism is a common failing is an acknowledged truth, and that I am under its influence will be sufficiently evident by the publication of my own memoirs. Whatever opinion my readers may form of my narration, their humanity will commiserate my situation, when I inform them, that my thrice told tale has lost its powers of interest, and that I am awed into silence by the languid looks, if not absolute frowns of my companions. But, exclaimed vanity, the public knows it not, and are not public circles capable of the same feelings as private? You have pleased and instructed, and would still interest, if you possessed the charm of novelty. Sit no longer sad and silent, but seize the pen, and once more tell your antiquated stories. *Vanity* had nearly made a conquest of me, when sud-

denly a host of rival candidates for literary fame, appeared, amongst whom I hid my "diminished head." But vanity repulsed, made way for a noble advocate—*Philanthropy.* She whispered, I had tales to tell which might benefit my readers, an object far more worthy than the acquisition of mere literary fame. Her argument has prevailed; and if she is not mistaken, I shall have the inexpressible satisfaction of knowing I have contributed my mite towards the interests of religion and morality.

I begin my history at the age of four years, because it is the æra from which I date any reflection. I then found myself standing by the side of a lady, in company with a little girl about my own size, with each a book in our hands. This lady informed us, that if we would but learn to say *A*, *B*, and *C*, she would love us dearly. We both looked upon an ornament or two she wore, in preference to our books, and it was long before she could prevail upon either of us to learn the three letters in question. The words, "If we would but—" implied, I well recollect, to my infant ideas, that was *all* she would require as the price of her love, and was the moving argument which prevailed over my aversion. But

at this early age, I became a victim to deception; for three and twenty letters followed in regular rotation, and were to be learnt before my teacher would acknowledge she loved me. This task accomplished, the next promise held out to captivate my attention was the assurance, that if I learnt to put my letters together, and spell, I should soon be a *man.* My heart bounded with this prospect, chiefly, because if I were a man, I knew I should be able to look over the hedges as I walked through the fields; and with the word *soon,* I associated very justly the idea of speed; for I knew that dinner soon followed breakfast, supper dinner, &c. and consequently felt assured, that my height would soon increase with my knowledge. I quickly made myself master of one, two, and even three syllables, and urged my little companion to the same diligence, as she also had received a similar assurance that she would soon be a woman. We each gained commendation for our progress, and we daily looked on each other to see what advances we made in stature; till, at length, after venting our mutual feelings of disappointment on perceiving no difference, we agreed to ask our instructor, whom she called Mamma, and I, Aunt, why,

as we had learnt our tasks so well, we were not grown into man and woman as she said we should.

I well recollect the confusion manifest in her countenance at this unexpected question. She hesitated and paused for an answer, and at length said, she had made a little mistake if she told us we should *soon* be man and woman; she meant to say, that if we were good at our learning, we should one day or other be a great man and woman. As this was a more undefinable phrase, she certainly shewed policy in her choice: but the acknowledgment she was constrained to make of the possibility of her mistaking in any of her representations, tended greatly to lessen her in our estimation. From that moment I became, in a measure, inured to deception; and when I heard of hobgoblins in wells, gaffers in the fire, and chimney-sweepers always at hand to put naughty boys into their bags, I always privately hinted to my Cousin my doubts of the truth of the intelligence.

About two years elapsed, spent chiefly in the alternate employments of reading, walking, and playing with my young Cousin, when one day after an unusually correct repetition of my appointed task, I was informed by my

Aunt, that as a reward for my diligence, she would take me to see a gentleman, who had some little boys about my own age, with whom I might play all the time I was there, and have nice things to eat besides. I sprang up in her lap to kiss her for so kind a proposal, and ran instantly in search of my Cousin to communicate the joyful news, and concluded she was to participate in the entertainment. But I soon learnt it was not convenient for her to accompany us, and for the first time we were to be separated in our pleasurable recreations. The novelty of the visit, however, seemed in a measure to reconcile me, and the assurance my Aunt told me to make her, of my return in the evening, loaded with nice eatables, dried up the tear which glistened in her eyes as I was lifted into the carriage. The mingled emotions of gratitude, hope, and expectation, were expressed by my ready tongue, as we drove briskly along; and when the carriage stopped at the door of the kind gentleman who my Aunt said had invited me to see his little boys, I leaped out, and found myself in a moment surrounded by them in a large court. Inclination led me to join their society immediately, but I submitted to be led by my Aunt into the

house, where, in a few minutes, the gentleman attended us.

After a short conversation with my Aunt, to which I paid no attention, being occupied in watching the movements of the little boys in the court, the gentleman called me to him, and taking both my hands, "So my little man," said he, "you are good enough to come to ——." My Aunt hastily interrupted him, and put her finger on her lip—"to see you, Sir," said she. I gazed in his face. and added, "my Aunt says, if I am good at learning, I shall one day or other be a great man." He smiled; "We can't say," said he, "how that may be; all good men are not large in size, or become great in the world, but a very wise man has said, 'the mind's the standard of the man'." Though I did not comprehend the distinction, yet I was well pleased with the manner of the speaker, who soon led me into the court where the little ones were at play, and presented me to them with an injunction to treat me well, and lend me any of their toys. Their tops engaged my attention till we were summoned to dinner. where I sat down in company with my Aunt and two or three more ladies who appeared to be at home. Immediately after dinner, the

little boys departed, and I was left with the ladies, the gentleman soon following the young ones out of the room. My Aunt soon informed me, that she was going to call upon a lady, and should return in an hour to take me home with her. With this assurance, I should probably have suffered her to depart very contentedly, had she not walked so often to the door and returned again to give me another kiss, and repeat her injunction that I should be a good boy and not cry. This conduct suggested to my mind, that there was something very dreadful in being left alone with two or three ladies for an hour; and, notwithstanding their agreeable looks and caresses, I regarded them with a suspicious eye, and planted myself at the window in sullen silence to wait the return of my Aunt. The clock struck twice, shade after shade spread over the face of the sky, when unable to stifle my feelings any longer, I burst into a flood of tears, and exclaimed, "Where is my Aunt? I want to go home to see Lucy." The oldest of the ladies now drew me towards her, and in the kindest accents informed me, that my Aunt, fearing it might make me uneasy, had concealed the truth, which was, that I was placed at school, where, if I was a good boy, I should be quite

as happy as I had been while living with her; that I should see her every holiday, and, she hoped, surprize her each time by my improvements in learning. The only word which dwelt upon my mind of this kind sentence was, "school"—with that I associated every evil of which I had the smallest idea. I threw myself on the floor, crying out—"I was only to go to school if I was a naughty boy! I'm a good boy! I won't go to school!" with many similar exclamations. Each of the ladies endeavoured to convey comfort to me, who refused to be comforted.

As I lay stretched on the floor in an agony of despair, I heard one of them say—poor dear child, how I pity him, this is all the effect of deception. I had some conception of the meaning of the word *pity*, and the association that it could exist in the breast of a School-mistress, shot a gleam of pleasure over my sad heart. I arose, and slowly went towards her; she proposed taking me to bed, and I consented by silence and non-resistance. There, amidst sobs and murmurs, I fell asleep. I awoke to a sullen sort of composure, anxiously awaiting the events which were further to befal me. To the kind interrogations made me by all around, I maintained an inflexible

silence; yet I did as the rest of my young associates, as I imagined in *misery*, and entered with the group the dreaded school-room I had not seen the preceding day. After the morning devotions, each of my companions were presented with a short task, and I was informed the same favour would have been conferred on me if I had spoken as the rest. After breakfast, I joined in play, and felt my spirits a little raised by the jovial looks of my school-fellows—one only appeared like myself, sad and gloomy, and I soon learnt he was in expectation of punishment on account of his having told an untruth the preceding day.

Curiosity to know in what the punishment consisted, induced me to enter the school-room less reluctantly when the summons arrived. The youth was immediately mounted upon a high stool, an enormous large tongue of a deep red colour tied over his chin, which gave him the most hideous appearance; and the Master, who was the kind gentleman to whom I was introduced by my Aunt, began a long discourse upon the guilt of lying—while he traced in the plainest language, the evil consequences of it, both to society and the individual, and above all, the dreadful

denunciations made by God in his holy word, a solemn silence reigned amongst all my school-fellows, and the culprit himself sobbed aloud. The question was then addressed, whether he believed the truth of this representation, to which he replied in the affirmative. He was then required to confess his sorrow for the offence, first to his offended God, and then to his Master; a form of petition to both was given him verbally by his instructor, and he was permitted to descend from his elevated station, the tongue was taken off his chin, and he seated himself with the rest of his companions.

During this scene, my mind was engrossed by one idea, that *my Aunt* ought to have been placed by the side of the youth; and I resolved to carry home to her the heads of the first moral lecture I had ever heard. I sat musing on the possibility of my Aunt's being hanged up on a gallows, which was the climax of human punishment our Master reached; till the continual summons each of my school-fellows in turn received to read, led me to expect *mine* would also arrive, which I resolved should not be obeyed—never, said my proud heart, shalt thou read in a school. To my great surprize, I was not desired to do so;

my Master seemed not to see that I was in the room; not one of the family even looked upon me; and if my young friends had acted the same part, I believe I should have imagined myself an invisible being. I became extremely mortified at this conduct, and the ambitious wish of distinguishing myself in learning also arose. I felt conscious of a superiority over several of the youths in this respect, and fired by the desire of shining, I crept on the third morning to the side of my Master, and softly whispered in his ear, "I can read"—"Can you, so?" replied he, "why I almost despaired of hearing you speak—If you will exercise your tongue to-day in good humoured chat, and look pleasantly, I will do you the favour of hearing you read to-morrow." The longed-for morrow came, and with it my glory; no academic triumphed more, or exceeded more the expectations of his brother collegians. I was pronounced competent to the acquirement of the Latin; and, from that moment, the mist of prejudice dispersed, and I beheld the fair fabric of a school in all its attractive and advantageous colours.

So pleasantly did my time pass, occupied by learning and diversions, that when the first vacation arrived, I felt no other desire of re-

turning home, than what was occasioned by my affection for my Cousin Lucy. For my Aunt, I had lost all esteem—she had deceived me already in too many instances for me to place any further confidence in her. When I first entered her presence, she flew towards me, and seemed to expect an equal ardour; but I involuntarily drew back, while she exclaimed—"Aye, this is the fruit of sending darlings to school; how it weans their affections." As if on purpose to undeceive her in this conjectured cause, Lucy entered at the moment. I caught her in my arms, kissing her with the warmest affection, then capering before her, and demonstrating a joy, which fully proved a short absence was productive of no change of esteem towards a worthy object. As soon as we were alone we compared histories, and I found she had been trepanned in the same manner as myself, into a residence with persons of good sense, where she made daily improvements in useful knowledge.

When the time drew near for our return to school, my Aunt made long speeches to reconcile us to what she supposed we should deem an evil; but as that evil existed only in her own imagination, they shared the same

fate as those of many wiser orators, obtaining only an entrance and immediate exit. We did indeed sigh over the cakes, the toys, and the sweetmeats, as we viewed their package; but the sigh was raised by the idea that they were not to be eaten together. These nice articles being well secured, my Aunt desired us to say what we wanted besides to take with us to school:—we stared at each other, and remained silent.

On the following day, the question was repeated, with the addition that she was certain we must want something. I now began to feel uneasy, because I could not invent a want. Lucy's genius was more fertile; she thought of several, and rather of an extravagant sort; she grew quite whimsical, and, I thought, less good humoured, after this request of her mother, while I was tired by its frequent recurrence. Fortunately, however, I was relieved from this state of suffering, two days before my departure; for, as I was gazing out of the window, the beadle of the parish passed by full dressed, to attend a vestry-meeting. I clapped my hands together, and eagerly exclaimed, I should like a cocked hat like the beadle's. I verily believe, had I wished for a coronet, my Aunt would have

taken active measures to obtain for me in ·due time the desired honour; but, for this more humble request, no delay was permitted; and, on the morning of departure, I was supplied with a miniature representation of the beadle's hat, fitted exactly to my head. It possessed a composing quality; my heart was now at rest from the arduous task of wishing, which, as the poet justly remarks—

"Of all employments is the worst."

It lessened too my regret at parting with my dear little Cousin, so impatient was I to exhibit this splendid purchase to my young companions. To my surprise and disappointment, my Aunt objected to my wearing it: she assigned the reason to be her apprehension it might get injury from the dust of travelling. I heard her say to a friend at her elbow, "the boy cuts such a grotesque figure, there's no standing it." My learning in hard words could not reach her meaning; but, being always suspicious of some deception, I conjectured she had used it on the present occasion, and insisted upon having the box opened, that I might obtain ocular demonstration of its containing my hat, which this bye speech had suggested in my mind a doubt

of.—Satisfied on this head, I bade adieu to my fair Cousin, and entered the carriage with a tolerably cheerful heart; my Aunt expatiating all the way on the variety of entertainments she had in reserve for me during the next vacation: thus implying, what the conduct of too many evince, that amusement was, in her estimation, the most desirable good.

I pass over my Aunt's discourse with the ladies on our arrival, as there was nothing particularly interesting to me in any of her themes, till my new hat was mentioned. This subject was prefaced by a wink of her left eye, as she said, "Cœlebs has chosen a very beautiful hat; but I think it will be best for him only to wear it in the play-ground, as your road to church, I observe, is very dusty, and nothing injures hats more than dust you know Ma'am." This extreme of carefulness again raised my suspicion that something was concealed; but, as I had long ceased to expect simple truth from my Aunt, I forebore any question on the subject till after her departure, when I addressed the lady I loved, which was my Master's eldest daughter, and requested her to look at my new hat, and tell me the reason why the dust of a road was

more hurtful for it than that of a play-ground. She instantly complied with my wishes; and after surveying it a few moments, and smiling as she turned it round, "My dear Cœlebs," said she, "the reason why your Aunt does not wish you to wear this hat to church is very evident; she wishes you to be dressed like others, and not to be laughed at, which every body is who dresses or acts in a foolish manner. Your choice of this hat was not proper, since it is a description only worn by such persons as beadles and servants." She was proceeding, but my reasoning powers were sufficiently strong to render more argument unnecessary, and I exclaimed, "I'll never put the hat upon my head, why did not my Aunt tell me so?"

As this was a question more puzzling to my friend, she evaded an answer. Perhaps I might have worried her to the attempt, had I not suddenly been seized with sickness and pains in my stomach, which increased so much upon me, that medical aid was called. Amongst the whispers I heard between my doctor and nurse, one made an indelible impression, namely, that my illness was entirely occasioned by the improper and superabundant food of which I had partaken during

the past month. This brought to my recollection various instances of my Aunt's pressing solicitations on the subject of eating; and now under the immediate pressure of the evil the compliance occasioned me, I forgot her kind *intentions*, and my own blameable deficiency in self-control, venting in my heart bitter reproaches against her. A few days restored me to health and spirits; but it was many weeks before I could think with complacency on one who had exposed me to the danger of ridicule—who had procured for me so severe an indisposition; in short, who had forgotten, in her general conduct towards me, that she had to treat with a reasonable being.

Puerile stuff! exclaims the scholar, should such deign to cast an eye over the foregoing pages. What, I reply, did the philosopher of ancient days adopt the merciful scheme of Pythagoras as the dictate of his benevolent heart, in opposition to his enlightened understanding! Shall the modern British senator plead the cause of humanity towards the brute creation—the poet sympathize with the poor hack-horse, worn out by barbarous treatment—the ingenious projector devise means to lighten the unavoidable severity of his fate—and shall not the writer suggest a hint to me-

liorate the evils inflicted on the years of childhood? Bear, generous critic, with a chapter addressed to mothers, aunts, and elder sisters; and, in return for your kindness, I engage, in due time, to offer a few hints worthy *your* serious attention.

CHAP. II.

To proclaim our advantages, mental or personal, is usually esteemed an act of vanity; and this opinion necessarily throws embarrassment in the way of one who undertakes the arduous task of writing his own history. But, previously to an adoption of the most popular maxims, it is our duty to examine their pretensions to infallibility; and I beg leave to offer a hint on the charge of vanity ascribed to those who are willing to own themselves handsome, sensible, or accomplished. I trace the passion of vanity to originate from the most absurd of propositions —that man is the former of his own powers. To this sentiment much criminality must be attached, since it strikes at the root of gratitude, that important debt we owe to our God and our neighbour. Now, as I declare my opinion entirely opposite to this proposition, I expect to be absolved from the imputation of vanity, when I state the fact, that I was *gifted* with a strong understanding, a reten-

tive memory, and a beautiful person. The bountiful donor of these gifts had also furnished an instrument, whereby the two former were greatly cultivated and improved, in the person of the tutor under whom I was placed by my Aunt. He was the Curate of the village where he resided, alike eminent for learning, piety, and usefulness. With his young charge he acted more in the capacity of a father and companion, than a school-master, and possessed a singular felicity in the difficult art of feeding the flame of genius, without damping the spirit of dulness, or exciting sparks of envy. My Master was also a convert to some parts of the system of Lycurgus, as respected the practice of conversation between ourselves; and the admirer of ancient manners might occasionally have imagined himself transported to Sparta, as he listened to our various questions and replies on a winter evening, as we were seated around our supper-table, under the command and inspection of the wisest of the circle, acting the part of an Iren. To this honourable station my abilities raised me before I had quite attained my twelfth year; and here I will candidly confess, that in the exercise of my authority, a degree of arbitrary conduct was too

often discoverable, for which I never failed to receive a private reprimand from the vigilant inspector of *my* actions; who, in this manner, continually exemplified the importance of that golden rule—"Do as you would be done by."

The habit I acquired of nice inspection into the conduct of my school-fellows would have proved injurious to my mind, had I been suffered to pass myself without a censor. It might have excited only a censorious spirit; but under the management of my judicious Master, it imparted a knowledge of human nature, and aided in fixing impressions connected with the most important truths in religion and morals. On the return of vacations, I regularly visited my affectionate Aunt, still retaining my observing faculties, which, alas, for her credit, had better remained dormant. Among the various points in her character I disapproved, none appeared in my eyes so reprehensible as the system of deception which she practised, not only on my youthful mind, but maintained over those of all her acquaintance.—She could relate no tale without embellishment—seldom promise with the intention of fulfilment—declare herself delighted by the presence of those she

disliked most, and regularly ordered herself to be denied, if the smallest inconvenience attended the admission of a visitor. On this last species of falsehood, some nice distinctions were noted by my Aunt and her friends who followed the same practice; and in the judgment of charity, I *now* feel somewhat inclined to admit them, were it possible to define them clearly to the judgment of youth and ignorance; but as it is probable that period will not speedily arrive, the moralist must needs remonstrate till it does.

Accustomed from the high rank I sustained at school to the task of reproof, I could scarcely refrain from the bold adventure on this occasion; when a more prudent measure suggested itself to my fertile imagination, namely, to copy from the larger Concordance in my Master's study the most striking texts on the sin of lying, and leave them behind me, for the perusal of my Aunt. This task was easily accomplished, as I had obtained, from my attainments in book-knowledge, the privilege of access to any one in the Library. In order to cover the appearance of too pointed a rebuke, I added many other texts on other subjects to my memorandum pages, which I left carelessly among trifles I

knew my Aunt would overlook. I waited rather impatiently for the return of the next vacation, to discover the effect of my design; when I received the intelligence that I was to spend that time with my Godmother. The same post brought a letter from my Aunt addressed to my Master, the contents of which he seemed reluctant to communicate. He answered it by return of post. A few days afterwards another epistle arrived, in the well known direction of my Aunt's writing, when I was formally summoned to the study; but, ah! not to hear the usual precious dew-distilling sweets of private instruction, but the heart-rending sentence, pronounced in a tremulous accent—"Cœlebs, you are not to return here again after the holidays." I faintly replied, "Why not, Sir?" and received for answer—"Your Aunt has her reasons, my dear boy, and I have promised not to disclose them. She is to you a very kind relation, and I am certain has your interest nearest her heart. She thinks a change of schools will be to your interest; I would therefore recommend you to acquiesce cheerfully in her judgment, and by your increasing improvements, evince she is not mistaken." Before this harangue was concluded, my eyes ran over, and

all articulation failed me. I heard, however, the soothings addressed me with mute attention, and a firm resolution of application to my griefs. In vain did curiosity endeavour to fathom the mystery of my sudden affliction. My Aunt had enjoined secrecy, and my Master had promised compliance.

Twenty years rolled over my head, and had worn away the edge of this painful sensation, so general in the human mind, when the inspection of family papers led to the discovery once so anxiously desired. Neatly folded together, I found a small packet in my Aunt's writing, entitled, "Copy of my Letters to Mr. ——, about Cœlebs leaving school, with his answer." Deeming this packet worthy publication, I transcribe it as follows:—

TO REV. MR. ——.

Rev. Sir,

I expect you may be a little surprized at this letter from me, as nothing passed about taking away Cœlebs when I brought him to school last; but I beg you will not suppose I have any objections to make, as to your kindness to my dear boy, as I call him; for indeed, Sir, to me he is as dear as though he *was* my own; and as he is an orphan, I ought to be doubly careful of him, as I make no doubt you will think. I must confess I thought he looked very pale when he was with me last, and so did all my friends; and I happened at that time to have a very learned gentleman on a visit at my house, who questioned him about his learning, and said, he was amazed at his

information. Now, on talking this over with some of my friends, we all thought he must have been kept too close at his books, and that made him look so pale. This I remember I hinted to you when I brought him to school, and you promised to consider it. But on my return home, I found something in his play-box, which has determined me to take him from school for a short time. I found, Sir, several sheets of paper full of texts of Scripture, which convinced me he must have pored over the Bible more than is good for his health and spirits. I can have no objections to reading the Bible, but I think ignorant people and children are apt to misunderstand it, and to be led away by reading it *too* much, to follow this new doctrine of the *Methodeses*, which goes so much *about*. I should be very sorry for Cœlebs to grow up a *Presbyterian*, and that was one reason why I sent him to you, Sir, as a Church of England clergyman. I intend he shall accept an invitation to spend the next holidays with his godmother, who lives in London, and has a large family; and as they live in a very genteel manner, and go to all the public amusements, I have no doubt his health and spirits will be greatly amended. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

M. G.

P. S. On second thoughts I wish to say, that in case you will check Cœlebs in reading the Bible so much, I will let him return to you, after he has had a few months' pleasure.

I conjecture that if my Aunt was permitted once more to appear amongst us, she would be a zealous opponent of our Bible Societies. What a terrific idea! A *female* opponent of the Bible Societies! "Every lady is an host," once exclaimed an eminent orator. In a low-spirited moment I am ready to anticipate the

appearance of *such an host*, for is not this an age of much literary competition? And have not the efforts of male genius been directed towards their demolition? But I fly from the painful anticipation, to my task of copying the reply to my Aunt's letter.

TO MRS. M. G.

Madam,

The surprize I might receive on the perusal of your letter this morning, was greatly exceeded by my *concern*. I can truly assure you, that to part with Cœlebs will cost me a pang little short of the parting from my own son. I am convinced that could you behold his countenance at this moment, your alarm respecting his health would cease; and that if you reflect on the nature of those amusements, in which you expect he will engage at the next vacation, it will be excited. I see Madam, by your postscript, the turning point of his final dismission from my care and tutorage rests with myself; and I own you have put my integrity to its utmost stretch. If I will divert Cœlebs from the study of the Bible I may retain him. Think, Madam, for a moment, upon the inconsistency of that clergyman of the Church of England, who discourages in the most *remote possible degree* the study of the Holy Scriptures. Does he not virtually deny one of his own church articles, that "the Bible contains all things necessary to salvation, and that it is easy to be understood by all persons of common sense." I endeavour to diversify the studies of my young charge, to vary the topics I deliver from my pulpit, to converse with my Christian friends, and poor parishioners, on entertaining and useful subjects; but still I revert primarily "to the law and to the testimony," and I say to them, if your studies and my words accord not thereto, there is no truth in them. How then shall they judge of my instructions, if I take from them the criterion I

have myself instituted? In expressing your fears, Madam, that the general study of the Bible will increase the numbers of that sect you profess so much to disapprove, you indicate at least a suspicion that their opinions are to be found there. Nothing but a careful examination and comparison of *their* creed, with that taught by your own church, can remove or confirm your suspicion; much less constitute you a proper judge of the controversy. I will, if it be agreeable, briefly open their principles, and flatter myself, that, waving a few reasonable objections to some of their expressions and methods of church government, your prejudices will in a great measure subside. *We*, Madam, of the Church of Englaad, have this high consolation in the reflection, that while we fulfil the duty of Christian charity in thinking well of our sectarian neighbours, we are not under the necessity of joining their party, from the apprehension of their possessing a more scriptural title to the salvation of their souls.

I conclude with the point in question—the future instruction of your nephew. I cannot, Madam, engage he shall read or remember less of the Sacred Volume, but I trust you will, from these few hints, be induced to consider the advantages to be derived from an acquaintance with those things, which alone can make us wise unto salvation. Early impressions are the most lasting: how important then to be furnished with a set of moral rules for our government in every possible situation into which we may be cast: how important to be furnished with ideas of the nature of *Deity*, and the human *soul*, built on the basis of *revealed truth*. The youth well instructed in the knowledge of his *God* and *himself*, will not easily become the victim of "false doctrine, heresy, and schism," from which we pray, "Good Lord deliver us."

I shall not acquaint Cœlebs with the contents of your letter, till I have the honour of hearing your final resolution on the subject.

In the mean while, I am, Madam, &c. &c.

FROM MRS. M. G. TO REV. MR. ——, IN REPLY.

Rev. Sir,

I must own I did not expect from a clergyman of your respectability such an answer. I thank you much for your regard to Cœlebs, but I cannot now think of his staying, as I see plainly you favour the *Methodeses*. I shall not trouble myself about controversy. They may be right in some things, very likely, but I wish to be right in all that my church teaches, and am quite satisfied with my faith in which I was educated. One thing I request of you, Sir, as a favonr, that you would conceal from Cœlebs the reason of his quitting you. I know human nature very well, and that young people are apt to indulge in a practice sometimes their friends are most averse to; for this reason I shall not forbid him to study the Bible.

With thanks for all your kindness to Cœlebs,

I remain, Rev. Sir, yours,

M. G.

Leaving my readers to indulge their own comments upon this brief correspondence, I return to my narrative. Severely as my spirits were wounded on the first disclosure of my Aunt's intention of removing me from school, they were soon restored to their usual temperature, as sources of consolation opened to my imagination. The love of change seems universally to reign in the youthful breast. Ambition too, lent her aid on the occasion; a new theatre was about to open, where I might display my conscious superiority over most of my age; and, above all, the visit to

my Godmother delighted my inmost reflection. This was a lady I never heard mentioned by my Aunt but in the highest terms of respect; and my catechism had raised the character she sustained in my ideas to the highest point of elevation. I congratulated myself on the religious knowledge I possessed, and longed to prove myself, in this respect, worthy of her owning. Notwithstanding all these pleasing anticipations, the parting from my honoured preceptor, my female friends in the family, and my dear school-fellows, was mournful; and many hours I mused and wept by turns, as the stage drove briskly along.

Towards the close of the evening I arrived at the Inn, where I was met by a smart footman, and conveyed to the handsome town residence of my Godmother. I was shewn into a room where an old Gentleman was seated, reading the newspaper and smoking a pipe. He looked pleasantly upon me, and laying aside both his pipe and paper, accosted me with the question—"Well, my lad, are you glad or sorry to leave school?" Having always been accustomed to speak as I felt, I instantly replied, "Both Sir,"—when the door opened, and a Lady entered, dressed in the highest style of the fashion. Now my young

female readers immediately picture her form to their minds. Yet her dress bore no resemblance to any fashion they can have an idea of; and if they are curious on the subject, they must apply for information to their great aunts or grandmothers, who, doubtless in full dress, looked like my Godmother. Before I could properly present myself to the Lady, the old Gentleman exclaimed, "Here is an honest lad, who makes no scruple to say he is sorry he is come to see you." The Lady looked rather grave as she took my hand, and observed, "Schools do not always teach politeness." "No, no," added the Gentleman, "'tis pity they should;" and then he resumed his paper and pipe.

As I had ever maintained and taught my younger school-fellows the principle of self-justification, I was not disposed to relinquish it on the present occasion. I therefore eagerly exclaimed, "I did not say, Ma'am, I was sorry to visit *you*, but only that I felt both joy and sorrow at leaving school." Without noticing my speech, the Lady observed, she must not stay a moment in that smoky room; and hurrying both herself and me out of it, she led me across a spacious hall into another apartment, and introduced me to her children,

four in number. The eldest son, a youth about eighteen, just returned from Eton, was reclined upon the sofa, from whence he only condescended to notice me by a bend of his head. The younger, of fifteen, was holding a skein of silk for his sister, two years younger; and the eldest young lady of sixteen, was reading aloud to the party. As I had naturally a tolerable address, I easily accommodated myself to the first introduction, but in a few moments felt in its full force the awkwardness of my situation; for after I had answered the general inquiry made by my Godmother of the state of the roads and my Aunt's health, no question seemed to remain, and consequently no answers could be rendered.

The young lady had closed her book—the young scholar had opened his eyes upon me, and the whole party seemed to my imagination exclaiming mentally, "What will he say next!" How did I wish myself again alone with the smoking old Gentleman, much as he had misrepresented my first speech: it was, methought, better to be *misrepresented* than *silenced*. I was quickly relieved from my embarrassment, though at the expense of my nerves, by a most violent rap at the street

door I had ever heard. I started involuntarily from my seat, and my companions were equally impelled to burst forth into laughter, in which I as readily joined on a moment's recollection; for I knew such raps, in a smaller degree, were not unusual. The scene was now changed, for my Godmother had flown out of the room as hastily as I had started from my chair, at the noisy summons, to meet her company in the drawing-room; and when she was gone, her sons and daughters could talk.—"I'm glad you are come," cried the youth of fifteen, rubbing his hands, "we shall have such fun!" "We will go to the play to-morrow night," said the scholar, "if grumpy father will hear of it: which do you like best, tragedy or comedy?" I replied, I should like best to see one of Shakspeare's tragedies. "That's lucky," returned the scholar, "for to-morrow is to be acted Macbeth." I looked at the ladies, and very sincerely as well as gallantly intimated my hope they would be of the party. "No, no," returned the younger brother, "there will be no fun if they go." —"You need not be so pert," retorted his youngest sister, "you know we *can't* go, or we should not ask your leave." I naturally asked the reason *why* they could not go;

which brought an explanation from the eldest sister in nearly the following words—"You don't know our mamma yet; she has not introduced us to any public place, because we should make her look *old*. She has promised to introduce me next year; and if she is not so good as her word, I am resolved to do as our eldest sister did three years back, run away and be married. To-night is one of her largest routs, and you see how she is dressed out, you'll scarcely know her to-morrow at breakfast; but so long as she can but look young at night, she cares not how she looks in the morning, unless indeed when she pays morning visits: now I dare say you can't guess my mamma's age." I replied, I was no guesser of ages, but I thought she looked about thirty-five. "Aye," returned the young lady, "that is just what she would be thought; but papa told me only yesterday, that mamma was fifty last birth-day." "What a great thing to know," cried the younger brother; —"and you'll be fifty too if you live long enough, and then most likely you will want it to be kept a secret as much as mamma does."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant to announce supper, and we all adjourned to the same parlour I had

first entered, where the old Gentleman kindly seated me next himself, and observed—" this is routing night, so you will see no more of your Godmamma; and while I am marching up to bed, the company will be coming in full drive. I sometimes meet one or two on the stairs, and give them my blessing, while I bless myself that I am not forced to be among them." " If you would take a house, Sir, at the West End, you would escape this confusion altogether," observed the elder son, " and this would still continue an excellent city accommodation." " Hold a little, young man," rejoined the father, " you are not to join your mother's party, and try to persuade me out of my fixed resolve, never to leave the spot where I have gained all the profits which have set you above your neighbours. I'm not to learn at sixty-five the *end* of *West End* houses."

The stern look with which these words were uttered, imposed a general silence, till the speaker addressed me with the question— " What are you designed for my lad?" I replied, I understood from my Aunt I was to have a college education, and then to choose either of the professions. " Which would that be," was the natural enquiry. I replied, the

Church, adding, that my Aunt told me I must depend on rising in it upon my own learning and abilities. "A poor dependance," remarked the old Gentleman; "if you have no money to buy a living, or interest to get one, you'll be a poor Curate as long as you live. She had better put you to trade some other way—but I wonder you have no better dependance than learning and abilities. I understood your father was a man of considerable property. I know he died abroad, and I think I heard something about a person to whom he had given a power of attorney. He cheated him I suppose. He was a fool for giving such a power as entitles any one to *sell*, as well as *buy* and *receive* interest; but there have been many such fools before him, and will be after him no doubt."

The old Gentleman now turned to his eldest son, and began a long explanation on the nature of powers of attorney, and the stocks in general, to which the youth seemed to listen with attention, making occasional remarks, which appeared greatly to please his father; when the clock struck ten, and the servant entered with bed-room candlesticks. This was the hour when the master of the house, and the younger inmates, retired to rest, and I felt happy it was arrived.

Fatigued by the journey and bustle of the day, I sunk into repose in the room allotted to me, in company with the youngest son, notwithstanding the noise of the house, and the rattle of coaches, which did not cease, as I was informed, before three in the morning.

I reserve my morning adventures for my next chapter.

CHAP. III.

Refreshed greatly in feeling and appearance, I joined the same party at the breakfast-table I had left the preceding evening. Good humour was seated on the countenance of the elder branch, and where this is the case in a family, I generally remark there is an air of delight diffused over every other face, and every little occurrence. But one person was absent whose presence was needed to complete the scene—the mother, and mistress of the family. Her evening's amusement had incapacitated her from greeting her husband and children with the cheerful compliment of "good morrow." The young Etonian seized the first opportunity of intimating our united wishes for permission to visit the theatre that evening, which, after a few trifling objections on the part of his father, was granted. The old gentleman dispatched his breakfast hastily, and set off to his counting-house. The young scholar then called upon us to congratulate

and thank him for the success of his late evening's manœuvre, as he termed it—"for," says he, "do you think I should have listened to all that nonsense about the stocks, if it had not been for the purpose of putting my father into good humour? I know he wants to make a tradesman of me, but he will never accomplish that purpose." "What then do you intend to be?" said I. "A gentleman to be sure," returned he. "What, do nothing all your life," rejoined I. "Nothing but hunt, dance, visit, and travel, and will not that be enough?" questioned the youth; and then, without waiting my reply, he went on to enumerate the advantages of being born to riches, and condoled my misfortune, as he termed it, in this particular. This condolence was unnecessary; for it had been firmly fixed as an opinion in my mind by my late preceptor, that wealth was a blessing or a curse, exactly in proportion as we mortals choose to make it; and that it was often a misfortune to be born an heir to estates, as it damped that spirit of industry which is usually attended with good morals and cheerful spirits. The younger brother requested the scholar to detail some of the fun, or clever pranks of his Eton companions, expecting, no doubt, I should join

in the loud laughs which both his sisters and himself vented always upon the subject. But he was mistaken: for though well disposed to be pleased, I found it impossible to be so by the recital of so many mischievous actions, where I could discover not even the palliation of *wit* in their contrivance. But when the enumeration ended with a relation of garden robberies, I lost all patience, and exclaimed— "Why, this is downright immorality!" "Pho!" replied the narrator, "don't you know how the young Spartans used to steal? and what credit they gained by a dexterous concealment of their thefts? But I suppose you have not read the Grecian history." I coloured at the supposition of my ignorance, and replied, I knew the Grecian history as well as I did my A, B, C, and well recollected the observations made by my tutor on this part of the Spartan customs. He said in judging of the morality of a nation, we must consider the particular construction of their laws and government. The Spartans could hardly be called thieves, since in their republic they had all things in common; and they were encouraged in the art of concealment, for the purpose of making them dexterous in war, for which science these youths were all trained,

The scholar coloured now in his turn, doubtless at the flash of conviction which might seasonably surprize many older ones, when they pretend to talk of what they only superficially know. I went on—"I remember too, another of his remarks; he said the low standard of morals which had been set up by the Heathen world, proved the necessity of the Christian revelation, and called for our gratitude." I paused again, but receiving no answer, I resumed the discourse. In fact, I was now in my element, and well disposed to prove to my young friends, that the Grecian history was to me like A, B, C. I descanted on the wisdom of Solon, the patriotism of Themistocles, and for aught I know, I might have traced the fall of this mighty empire from its memorable rise, had not the room door been opened by my Godmother, and of course silence imposed upon my lips. The effect which her change of costume had produced on her general appearance was great indeed, and rendered her more characteristic of the venerable relation she bore me. She addressed me with kind inquiries after my night's repose, while with a trembling hand she poured out her coffee. My young companions informed her she had interrupted my learned discourse

about Greece and its heroes. "Oh, the little pedant!" exclaimed my Godmother, "well, you must lay aside your learning now for amusement. What a grave air you have—you are a parson already in appearance, we must make a little Pickle of you before you leave us." The latter part of the sentence was totally unintelligible to me, but I was soon informed of its meaning, by observing the eldest daughter taking a volume from the bookcase, accompanied with the words, "Oh! the sweet fellow, I long to see the end of his adventures; shall I read, Mamma?" Having received permission, she began; and, out of compliment to me, retraced the few pages she had already perused of the beginning of the story. How impatiently did I wait the developement of that character on which I was to ground my imitation; and how much was I astonished to hear his childish days were marked with such behaviour, as would have subjected him to the severest correction at the school I had just quitted. I was equally surprized at the want of taste in my companions, as respected the language of this admired performance, which I could not but deem low and vulgar.

The fair reader went on for about two hours, when a walk to the West-End of the town was

proposed for us three young gentlemen, and the ladies ordered the coach, to call at a few shops, where, probably—"They saw and cheapened goods, but nothing bought."

As nothing interesting passed on our perambulation to the Court-End, I pass on to the hour we set off for the theatre. Some difference of taste operated to excite a debate between the brothers, as to the part of the house we would enter. The elder one proposing the boxes for their gentility, and the younger the two shilling gallery for the superior *fun* it would admit. I ventured to urge the pit as the medium, but the scholar said he should not like to encounter the chance of any of his fellows from Eton gazing upon him there from the boxes; and, therefore, as the least evil, he chose to comply with his brother's inclination. From the first commencement of the debate I felt an indifference to the result; but had it been otherwise, I should have lost every sensation than that of the highest mental gratification, when the curtain drew up and the tragedy began. I hung enamoured on the moral and deeply interesting tale, and could the solemn impression I experienced, be transferred to *every* spectator on *every* representation of our dramatic poets,

the fond hopes of one of our modern divines would be realized, and the stage would become indeed a "school for virtue." I can only recollect one sentence which excited in my mind a sentiment of disapprobation against the celebrated author of Macbeth, and I mention it, because of its late application in a case which has excited far deeper sensations than *disapprobation*—even *disgust* and *horror*.

—Shakspeare has put into the mouth of his character Macbeth the following couplet, as he makes his exit fighting:—

> ——————"lay on Macduff,
> "And damn'd be he that first cries, hold, enough."

And our savage baptized infidels, in this age of *Christian* light, and *polite refinement*, have affixed them as a motto to the silver cup they have bestowed on the successful bruisers, or slayers of their brethren. Are we not constrained here to exclaim—O tempora! O mores!

Before the close of the first act, I discovered the nature of that *fun*, which my youngest companion had promised himself, namely, to annoy the circle around him with noise and motion. Expostulation and entreaties being used to urge him to desist without effect, a stout sailor caught him up in his arms, and swore he would "haul him overboard." This threat,

from the execution of which he only *seemed* to be deterred by my agonizing cries, alarmed the young gentleman into a tolerable degree of peace and quietness; till the representation of the pantomime entertainment engaged his whole attention, and proved his mind to be of a construction, I fear too general amongst his elders—disposed to prefer *show* to *sense*. The buffoonery which now passed before my eyes, added to the songs with which its representations were intermixed, weakened even in my thoughtful mind, the effects of the moral tragedy; and, I have no doubt, the ingenious contrivers of our theatrical amusements are profound judges of human nature, and know exactly how to manage their "school for virtue" in such a manner, as not to lose their scholars from their proficiency of attainments.

The curtain fell long before my companions on all sides seemed to wish, and we were perforce obliged to consider of a retreat. I felt alarmed at the crowd, and prudently requested we might await its dispersion; but my young friends laughed at my fears, and protested it was *high fun* to be amongst the first to crowd out of the house. They regretted their Majesties were not there, as in that case they said, we might very likely have been carried

up the gallery stairs. So saying, they pressed forward, and I reluctantly followed. Not being able to make my way so well, I soon lost sight of them, and found myself in the open street to my great joy, unhurt, but somewhat anxious for the fate of my companions. After looking for a few minutes for them in all directions, I judged it best to walk to a stand of coaches I saw near me, and order myself to be driven home.

I found my Godmother and her eldest daughter waiting to receive us; the younger one had retired at ten o'clock with her father. Great alarm was expressed by the lady on the non-appearance of her sons, and the account I gave of our separation. Indeed, her apprehensions appeared far greater to my imagination than the occasion warranted; for *I* could see no danger to youths of fifteen and eighteen, in streets with which they were so well acquainted, and made no doubt of their speedy arrival. But when the clock struck one, two, and three, I began to think the matter wore a serious aspect, and felt greatly for the agitation of the ladies. I reproached myself for not persisting in my search for them when on the spot; but my Godmother declared her uneasiness would only have been increased, had I

not returned; and then removed my fears that they were fallen into the hands of thieves and murderers, by disclosing the ground of hers; namely, that they were fallen into bad company, which she acknowledged she knew to be the case the last time they were permitted to go to the play. "But," added she, "I winked at that, and kept it secret from their father, in the hope it would never happen again." Her daughter endeavoured to sooth her distress by remarking, this was only a frolic, such as Peregrine Pickle would have engaged in. "Don't talk of frolics like this, child," returned the anxious mother, "they may be very well to laugh at in a book." What a striking illustration did this scene furnish of the folly and danger of treating lightly in the presence of youth, those habits and dispositions which our better judgment cannot but condemn. My Godmother had *laughed* in the morning at the hero of romance enamoured with sinful companions, and she *wept* in the evening at the bare apprehension of her own sons being in similar circumstances.

The young gentlemen appeared about four o'clock, just as their mother was going to awake their father, to concert upon proper measures to adopt on the occasion. This step she

would have taken long before, had she not dreaded the passion she knew it would excite in his hasty and morose temper. The younger brother was evidently disordered by liquor, but the elder seemed tolerably free from any effects of that nature, and gave a plausible account of their spending some time in search of me; then, concluding I was returned, met a school-fellow at the door of the theatre, and was prevailed on to go home with him.

Whether the credence the young gentleman's mother gave to his story was real or affected, I cannot determine; but the effect he wished to produce by his apology was gained, as she engaged once more to wink at his conduct, and keep it a secret from his father. The consequence of this winking and secrecy, would most probably have been a repetition of the same offence: but this family was in most cases divided against itself; and in this instance it was happy for the morals and health of the youths it was so. The youngest sister had long owed her youngest brother a grudge for many rude treatments she had received from him, and now was an excellent opportunity for retaliation. She learnt the tale of the evening from her sister before she arose; and, while we were all sleeping in our

beds, in order to wear away the effects of our late fatigues and anxieties, she revealed the same to her father at the breakfast-table in the morning.

Mediocrity has ever been recommended to the notice of all who wish to imbibe just opinions, and exercise useful power; but a modern poet has declared, that

> " To find the medium, asks some share of wit,
> " And therefore is a mark, fools seldom hit."

Should my readers apply the poet's sentiment on this occasion to my Godmother and her spouse, I cannot help it; I must candidly proceed with my narration of their conduct.

The conduct of the lady has been already related. The old Gentleman finished his breakfast; and then, instead of directing his steps towards his counting-house as usual, he advanced to the bed-room, where his youngest son and myself were soundly sleeping away, as we fondly dreamed, the dire effects of the play-house visit. But we were in a moment undeceived, as we opened our eyes on the tall and stout figure, armed with a cane, which stood at the foot of our bed, and in a loud and authoritative voice cried, " You young scoundrel come forth."

Conscience doubtless applied the awful summons to the comprehension of my companion, which struck only my ear with amazement; for he sprang instantly from my side, and endeavoured to reach the door of the chamber, where he was seized by his powerful assailant, and, in his defenceless condition, underwent the severest flagellation my eyes ever beheld, and I trust ever shall behold. Not a word was spoken by the corrector, or a cry uttered by the corrected culprit; at which latter circumstance I expressed my surprize the moment I was left alone with him. "What!" he exclaimed, "do you think this is the first flogging I have had? Who thinks of crying out a second time? I should have been confounded mad if one of our *faggs* had seen me running to the door, but I was so between sleeping and waking, that I did not know what I did." So saying, he began dressing himself with great composure, while I even trembled at the scene he had endured. "I am only curious," observed he, "to know how my father came to the knowledge of the business, and how Jack will come off."

We hastened down stairs, and found the whole family at the breakfast-table, with the exception of the old Gentleman. My Godmother

was wiping her eyes, which were again surcharged with tears on the entrance of her youngest son, whom she caught in her arms, and implored not to mind his father's harshness, assuring him at the same instant, she had not been the discloser of the secret, and pointing to the aggressor. The youth eyed his sister with a look of malicious contempt, which seemed to indicate the time might come, when she would rue her conduct on this occasion; while he assured his mother he heeded his late chastisement less, if possible, than the similar ones he received at school. We now looked at the eldest son with enquiring eyes, and was informed by him, that his father had taken away all his money, amounting to about seven pounds, and solemnly declared he should return to Eton without a shilling in his pocket. This intelligence was given us with a rueful air. His mother dispatched her youngest daughter on a trifling errand, and then informed him in the absence of the tell-tale, that he need not fret at the loss of his money, as she could supply it from the sums she always contrived to save from the allowance made her for house-keeping. There was another part of punishment inflicted on the delinquents, which happily for *my* morals as well as theirs,

could not be evaded. This was the prohibition from again entering the theatre. I say happily for *my* morals; because having heard from the young gentlemen, that they had been greatly amused by some company they had fallen in with, my curiosity so strongly urged against my better judgment for an acquaintance also with this amusement, that I have no doubt I should easily have been prevailed upon to allow of an introduction after our next theatrical entertainment.

Sullen and resentful, the youths refused dining with their father; on which he ordered the servants on no account to convey any refreshment to their apartment. His indulgent partner, however, had taken care they should be previously well provided for in this respect, having heard and approved their intended absence. I now endeavoured to act the part of mediator, and deeply regretted the evils I had innocently occasioned; adding my opinion, that if my young friends were talked to, and argued with respecting their late faulty conduct, I thought they would see it in its true light. The old Gentleman replied, he might as well talk to the creditors of a bankrupt, as to either of his sons on terms of accommodation; especially while they were upheld by their mother, who

ought not to trouble her head about their management, but give it up to him, as he had given up that of the girls to her: that they must sulk on till they were tired, and found out which side of the account would balance most in their favour. He then expressed his supposition I had witnessed many such a scene as that morning had produced in his family; and asked me jocosely, how often I myself had been in a similar plight. I very honestly assured him I had never witnessed or experienced such a scene; at which he expressed himself astonished, and asked how my late master could bear rule without such discipline. I briefly related his method, which consisted chiefly in reasoning with, than punishing his pupils. It was too true, that his arguments were frequently inefficacious, and he was forced to call in aid various methods of chastisements; but they were all calculated to vex and harrass the *mind*, rather than the *body*; and in proportion to the sensibilities of the culprits, they operated in promoting the desired work of reformation.

Perhaps some of my readers may suppose me one of those who dream of a system of education universally applicable to all numbers, and all dispositions: but they are mistaken,

The sensible and judicious governors of youth, must ever *feel* the necessity of acting for themselves, and varying their schemes according to the nature of existing circumstances. But having experienced the good effects of the only system of education I ever saw, both on my own mind, and that of others, it is natural to advocate its cause, and to be indifferent to the investigation of comparative systems. At the time the foregoing conversation took place, I was so fully assured of the eligibility of the method, that I ended my recital with the remark, I was certain the boy that could not be *reasoned* into obedience, would never be *flogged* into it.

The old Gentleman having taken up his pipe and his newspaper, sat in for the enjoyment of the evening, it being Saturday, when he usually gave himself a few hours' relaxation from the cares of business. Perhaps the humours of his family might have excited painful emotions, had he not been so much the man of business, as to be wholly absorbed by its anxieties, and lost to all the tender sympathies and charities of public or private life. I spent the remainder of the evening in the sequestered spot my young friends had chosen; but with little more satisfaction than I should

have experienced in the society of the elder branches of the family. All parties were uncongenial to my humour, and I sighed for the friends I had left, probably to behold no more. One consolation remained; the approaching day was the Sabbath, and I flattered myself on that day of sacred rest, our mutual dissatisfaction would subside. How far my expectations were realized, my next shall inform.

CHAP. IV.

THE dawn of each returning morn is an interesting epoch in the life of every individual, leading on by slow, and too often forgotten degrees, to the dawning of that "day for which all other days were made." How interesting, especially to the reflecting mind, is the dawning of the sabbath morning. A thousand pleasing images crowd on the Christian's recollection before the powers of his intellect allow sufficient time to collect them into regular topics of meditation. I had been well instructed in the duties of the Sabbath-day; and though I cannot truly say that at the early age of which I am writing, I was *feelingly disposed* towards them; *habit* had somewhat endeared them to me, and I seldom failed in my observance. I had been told by my Christian instructors it was profitable immediately upon waking on that morning, to repeat a verse or two of a hymn suitable for the day; and I had stored my memory

with several of that description. On this morning, I repeated them while my young acquaintance seemed to sleep by my side, and rising softly in fear of his waking and bantering me, as he had done before, out of my duty, I preferred my morning sacrifice of prayer and praise. I quitted the room before he awoke, as I supposed, and arriving in the breakfast-room before either of the family, I opened the door of the book-case, and as the most suitable volume for the day, I reached forth a Bible, and began reading. My God-mother soon entered. She eyed me and my studies with mute attention. I closed the book from compliment to her presence, not from fear of her displeasure; and felt somewhat surprised that no commendation was bestowed on my employment by the professed guardian of my Christian faith. In a few minutes the rest of the family assembled, with the exception of the master of the house, who rose earlier on week days, and lay later on Sundays than any other person in the family. My young companion whom I had left as I imagined asleep, took his seat by me, and glancing his eye on the Bible, which lay on the adjoining table, burst forth in a peal of laughter, exclaiming, he had found me out—

that he had suspected I was a Methodist, and this morning he was convinced of it; and then related how I had said hymns and prayers already—appealing also to my *public* readings for the test of my private opinions. Vexed at the general smile which went round at my expence, I warmly endeavoured to vindicate myself from the aspersion, by protesting I had never seen the inside of a Methodist worshipping place, or knew a single person of that denomination. But facts are stubborn things: it was proved that I prayed, said hymns, and read the Bible; and who, so detected, ever escaped a similar condemnation.

I cast a piteous look on my Godmother, as claiming her pretection against this torrent of ridicule: but, she alas! was sailing down the same stream. She, however, turned the tide a little in my favour, by diverting the attention of the company to a few anecdotes of preachers in that connection, whose zeal, probably, not always guided by wisdom, had exposed them to the ridicule of their enemies. From the contempt with which my morning's preparation had been treated, I began to suspect no church visit was intended; but I was agreeably undeceived by my God-

mother ringing her bell, and ordering the carriage to be made ready to convey us there. Her sons enquired where she intended going after church, and being told perhaps to Hyde-Park, they said then they would go too.

The clock struck eleven when we entered the coach, and I observed how late the London churches began.—"Why, you dont suppose, child," returned my Godmother, "that we want to be the first in the church; we are in excellent time to-day, we were *rather* too late last Sunday, for the communion service was begun."

The excellent time approved, as I found by all the present party, was the close of reading the Litany; and just at that instant we entered the spacious family seat. When the sermon began, I drew forth almost mechanically my little memorandum book, for the purpose of taking notes; but observing the tittering of the party, I soon returned it into my pocket, resolving to trust my memory alone with the truths I was about to hear. The careless manner in which my companions seemed to attend to the discourse, excited in my mind the strongest feelings of contempt for the weakness of their understandings: for at this

early age I had imbibed the opinion, that all persons who had the smallest pretensions to good sense, and classical taste, attended to the instructions which their learned and eloquent pastors delivered from their pulpits. The *reasonableness* of this opinion still maintains itself, though alas! I am constrained to admit its deception. After church, we adjourned as was proposed to the Park, where, inclosed in our vehicle, we beheld numerous persons enduring the same confinement, the wintry season not admitting further liberty. I own I saw no amusement in this invention of dissipating *Sunday time*, and *sermon reflection*. Fain would I hope that this fashion was as obsolete as the dress of my Godmother: but, here again, I am constrained to admit its existence, and to augur its continuance, till our Bible Societies have achieved the work their sanguine energies have begun. One might have supposed, a family circle situated in circumstances of so much equality and close compact, could have found some sources of entertainment within themselves; but such a supposition includes the notion, that good humour was also seated in the coach: than which nothing could be more remote. The younger brother and sister were

at open war, and never glanced at each other but with looks of defiance. The elder sister was disconcerted by her mother's remark at our first entering the coach, that she looked very ill, and seemed to be losing the small share of beauty she once possessed; while she herself sat sad and silent, probably musing on the self-evident truth, that she was in a similar condition. The Etonian had mistaken a Latin quotation he addressed to me, as we turned the corner of the Park, and could not forgive my detection of his error.

The humours and habits also of the head of this family circle, did not leave me reason to hope for a considerable alteration for the better on our return home. The only day on which he permitted the fashionably late hour for dinner was on Sundays; and the reason for this compliance with the taste of his lady was pretty evident. He found his own convenience in having the leisure of a long morning, to adjust a few accounts, which would otherwise have intruded on his week-day avocations of still greater moment. We found him surrounded with papers, and though it wanted less than an hour to dinner, still dressed in his morning gown, red cotton night-cap, and slippers. I suppose my countenance express-

ed the surprize I felt on beholding him and his avocations, for he exclaimed, "Cœlebs looks like an old woman who has just left me;" and then informed his lady that as she was not in the way, he had seen the nurse who was recommended to take the charge of her sister; but she had talked about being able to read well enough in the Bible to the poor sick lady, and referred to no less than four parsons for a character; from whence he conjectured she was one of the righteous-over-much, and dismissed her. For this conduct, he received for the first time in my hearing, a sentence of commendation, accompanied with an approving smile. Involuntarily, the thought darted across my mind—this old nurse would make me the best *Godmother*.

The servant appearing with dinner preparations, the old Gentleman huddled away his papers, and accepted my offers of assistance to convey them to their proper places. He remarked, as we were thus employed, it would be my duty when I was a parson to preach against doing business on Sundays, and to exhort people to go to church; and that it was his own intention to alter his plan of living very soon, when he should retire from trade. Thus prone is the human heart, which is justly

described as deceitful above all things, to "chide its infamous delay," in the work of reformation, "resolve, and re-resolve, then die the same."

It has been justly observed, that only two descriptions of persons enjoy the Sabbath-day—those who enter with warm and holy dispositions into its sacred duties, or those who consider it only as a day of pleasure and relaxation from worldly cares. The family I now visited, belonged to neither of these classes. Here, they maintained a medium which was neither wise, desirable, nor profitable—a medium which cast an air of *ennui* over each face, and checked the current even of innocent cheerfulness. My Godmother, though she generally allowed herself the pleasure of a ride after church, never paid or received morning visits; and her husband, though he saw no necessity for accompanying her in the hearing a sermon, thought it proper to read one to his family every Sunday evening. This, as he was rather an indifferent reader, and also troubled with a cough and shortness of breath, was an act of great self-denial, both on his own part, and that of his hearers. The author he chose, though justly esteemed for learning and piety, was not happily adapt-

ed to fix the attention of the young and ignorant; so that it usually happened at the close of the two hours devoted to the perusal of Bishop Tillotson, most of the auditors were nodding over his arguments and applications. I felt surprize at the indecorous behaviour of the servants, and anticipated the severity of that rebuke I made no doubt they would receive from the reader; but they were allowed to depart unreproved: and here, both heads of the family united in the clemency of winking at, instead of attempting a reformation.

Whether our family party felt simply the meliorating effects of time in softening woes, or the complacency which diffuses itself over the mind on the conclusion of a day, necessarily devoted to unpleasant occupations, I cannot determine; but certainly the supper hour wore somewhat the appearance of good humour; particularly, on the part of the old Gentleman, who related some of his youthful pranks, as he termed them; and to my great astonishment, proved himself to have been as worthy of chastisement as the youths he had so recently chastised. Had he intermixed expressions of regret and admonition as he proceeded with his candid statements of facts, his hearers possibly would have derived some pro-

fit: but on the contrary, he *seemed* pleased at the recollection of his follies, and to live over again the scenes which should have been consigned to oblivion. The consequence of this free communication was what might have been expected. The dignity of the parental character was lost in the eyes of the children: and the natural consequences which *might* have resulted from such youthful indiscretions were unheeded, because, in this particular instance, they had failed to produce their most baneful effects.

How early in life do we *feel* the force of the truth, that vanity is stamped on all sublunary expectations. I had scarcely passed one week in the society to which I had looked forward with delight, before I became impatient of quitting it; so uncongenial did it prove to my taste. I wrote to my Aunt, and intreated her to devise some scheme for my speedy emancipation, and my return to her. With her usual promptness of compliance to my wishes, I received a letter, containing a made-up story of circumstances, which occasioned my immediate return necessary. My London friends believed every tittle of her narrative; and on my own part, I lost that sensation of disgust which her duplicity

usually produced. I even admired her ingenuity; so lightly does the human mind conceive of sin, when its commission advances worldly interest, or gratifies its humour. Alas! in this particular, the *sincere believer* goes mourning more or less to the end of his pilgrimage. How does he wish to view sin with the purity of angelic vision, or still higher, even as *He* seeth it, who "chargeth even his angels with folly." And how does he lament that, to forsake it *entirely*, is as impracticable as to hate it *perfectly*, in his present frail state of existence.

My London friends appeared as little to regard our separation as myself. I was too deep a scholar for the Etonian, on whose cheek I had raised several blushes of envious pride. I was not enough of a Momus to please the younger brother, nor of a gallant to please the sisters; and was too insignificant a being to detach the regard of their parents from their pursuits of business and dissipation. Far different was my presence estimated by my affectionate Aunt, whose highest gratification was the society of myself, and her still dearer child, my fair Cousin Lucy. The system she meant to pursue respecting the introduction of her daughter to

the world, was opposite to that adopted by my Godmother; for she was extremely impatient for the season to arrive, and had taken her from school at the age of fourteen, and placed her under the care of a governess at home, in order to initiate her better in the art of seeing company, &c. &c. In the obsolete age of which I am writing, these arts were not to be attained by a boarding-school education: but the case is now altered, and I am informed that seminaries may easily be found, where young ladies are instructed in the forms of visiting, card-playing, fashionable readings, and definitions of terms; and where their minds are relaxed from the severities of study, by occasional attendance at the theatre and opera-house.

The lady to whom my Aunt had professedly committed the care of her daughter, was every way qualified to finish the work of education which had been well begun at school; but, unhappily, she was only nominally a governess; for the young lady was allowed to choose her own subjects, methods, and times for learning: and her mother also consulted her own wishes for her society, regardless of interruption to any study in which she might be engaged. After one year had passed under

this system of sway rather than subjection, the governess was dismissed, and my young Cousin's education considered as completed.

Matters were thus circumstanced when I returned from my London visit to the residence of my Aunt. I observed an air of gravity on the countenance of my Cousin Lucy, not usually seated there; and on the first moment of our being alone, questioned her on the cause. "I want your advice, Cœlebs," said she, "for I have been for the last week very uneasy in my mind, in consequence of something my Mamma says I must do before I am introduced to the world. I wish she had mentioned it while my Governess was here, for I think she would have informed me what the ceremony means; but perhaps you may know." I eagerly replied, she might depend on my best advice, and expressed, as I felt, much curiosity to be informed what she was expected to do. "Do you know," returned my fair companion, "what it is to be *confirmed?*" "Certainly," I replied, for I had been confirmed during the past year. "Oh! how glad I am," resumed Lucy, "and what did you say and do?" I then related to her briefly, the sum of a few conversations which my late honoured preceptor held with myself, and

several other of my schoolfellows, in which he endeavoured to explain the leading truths of the Christian religion; and asked her if she believed them, for if she did, she need not fear saying so to the Bishop. Lucy replied, she had no doubt but every thing in the Bible was true, though she had not considered much about what was there; but what perplexed her chiefly, were the words in the catechism respecting what was promised and vowed by her godfathers and godmothers for her, and which she was now to take upon herself, namely—That she was to renounce the Devil and all his works, &c.—"Now," added my Cousin, "I don't know what is meant by the *pomps* and *vanities* of this *wicked world*. I wish the makers of the catechism had said exactly what they were." "O" returned I, "I can tell you what they are in the present day, for my master informed us. He said, that the fashions or customs of the world were ever changing, as they were influenced by the various revolutions in society; so that no particular fashions and amusements were prohibited in the Scriptures; and for the same reason, perhaps, not by our catechism-makers; but the general rule was, that no worldly fashion or amusement was to be followed, which had

the smallest tendency to lead our hearts from the love of God, and a preparation for heaven. He reckoned up among the pomps and vanities of this wicked world at *present*, *balls*, *plays*, *card-tables*, late hours in visits, loitering away of time in vain and trifling conversation, and spending an undue proportion of our wealth in fine houses, carriages, and dress." Lucy hastily interrupted me—"It cannot" said she "mean balls, plays, and cards; for these are things I *know* my mamma intends me to go to, and I am learning the fashionable games: and you know she goes to them herself, though she has been confirmed." "That does not confute the matter," returned I; "for my Godmother does the same, and yet she renounced them in *my* name, therefore, of course in her *own*. I was surprized to see a *Godmother* so vain and trifling; she ridiculed the little religion I have, which was not enough to keep me steady to my renunciation of the vanities even of her family." Seeing Lucy still incredulous of my representation, I said I would refer it to the decision of the minister by whom she was to be examined; adding, I had no doubt of his readiness to inform her on every point in faith or practice; and that if *he* pronounced her fit to be confirmed, she need

be under no apprehensions." "You have greatly relieved my mind," replied she, "and I will implicitly follow his advice; perhaps he may advise me to stay till I am older: indeed, I do very much wonder that Mamma should be in such a hurry to make me religious; for, speaking of *you* one day, she said, the only fault you had, was that of being righteous-over-much, while you was so young." "You surprize me too," said I, "but you know Aunt does not always *speak* as she *thinks*." Thus ended our argument: but with all the impatience of a disputant eager to insure the victory, I awaited the decision of the Curate of the parish, before whom my Cousin was engaged to appear the following week.

Without entering upon the controversy, whether the rite of confirmation rests on Scripture authority or not, I may be allowed to remark, it affords an admirable opportunity to our Clergy of the Establishment, for pouring into the ears of our youth the wholesome food of sound doctrine; and that it is a well authenticated fact, that numbers of Christians trace their first religious impressions from this interesting period of their lives. May we not justly hope, that the majority of our youth entertain reverential ideas of the ministerial

character, and like my young Cousin and myself, are disposed to believe their affirmations, regarding them as oracles of wisdom and piety? But I hasten to relate the decision and effects produced therefrom on the present occasion.

With a grave, or rather melancholy air, Lucy entered the drawing-room, where a few minutes before the young Curate had been introduced to my Aunt and myself.—Although I would have given half my fortune to have staid the interview, I obeyed the nod from my Aunt, which indicated her wish I should retire. The warm emotions of sympathy I experienced, were only equalled by my impatience for a private audience, which I could not obtain till the following day. I *had*, however, the satisfaction to observe my Cousin's face was again restored to its usual air of cheerfulness, at which I was not in the least surprised, having frequently heard my late preceptor's poor parishioners observe, that a visit from him always did their "hearts good," and made their "spirits lightsome." What a happy lot is that of Minister, and how well have I judged by choosing it, exclaimed I to myself, as I mused over the *bright* side of clerical duties.

The happy moment for gratifying curiosity arrived, when Lucy declared the substance of what had passed at the dreaded and important interview, in nearly the following words: "Cœlebs, you were never more mistaken in all your life about the meaning of the catechism. Mamma seeing me flurried when I first came in, engaged Mr.—— in conversation, which composed me more than she could be aware of, as it turned on the very subject which had perplexed me so much. She asked him whether he was a subscriber to the new assembly, and he replied in the affirmative; though he said his profession would, as he conceived, make it indecorous to join the dance or the card table, but he should *occasionally* be a spectator. Mamma commended his religious consideration in public, but she hoped he had less reserve in private, and that she should be favoured sometimes with his company to her parties. To this he very politely bowed his assent, and I then of course felt certain there was no harm in these sort of entertainments. As I suppose I now looked a little more composed in my mind, Mamma opened the subject for which he had expressly called. He commended her for wishing me to be confirmed, and hoped

my own wishes coincided. I replied I had no objection, if I was fit to be confirmed. He then asked me if I could repeat my catechism *perfectly*. Mamma answered I could do so before I was five years old; for though she did not approve of teazing children with book learning very early, she took care that both you and I should be taught our duty in the catechism. Mr. —— said he made no doubt I had been well instructed, and there could be no reason to suppose the Bishop would refuse me confirmation. He advised me to read over again and be quite perfect in the catechism, and to use a few prayers and meditations which he would send me; and soon took leave after a little more conversation about indifferent matters: thus, concluded my fair Cousin, this dreaded affair has turned out a mere bugbear of my own creating." "You are not sure of that neither," returned I, "you forget the Bishop, perhaps *he* may be more inquisitive." "I thought of that," returned Lucy, "and hinted the idea to Mr. ——, just as he was going away; but he assured me he had attended many confirmations, and never heard a single Bishop ask any question."

My Cousin flew gaily away, and left me

deeply musing on her short discourse, particularly her concluding sentence—a Bishop *asks* no questions on these occasions: what an unbounded confidence then does he place in his inferior brethren; yet here was an instance of its fallibility. The solemn doctrine of responsibility rose for the first time to my youthful imagination, and I resolved never to be a Bishop.

In the midst of my reverie, I was interrupted by the delivery of a letter in the well-known direction of my late master's hand writing; and as I deem it worthy the attention of those scholars amongst my readers to whom I have hitherto proved an uninteresting narrator, I propose in my next to communicate its contents.

CHAP. V.

I CLOSED my last promising to communicate the letter I received from my late worthy tutor, which is as follows:—

"My young friend will not be surprized to find that I pursue him with instruction, even after the duty of instruction may seem to have ceased; for he knows me too well to suppose me indifferent to *consequences*, where I have endeavoured to implant *principles*. On the removal of my pupils, I generally commit to paper, and present them a few remarks I deem suitable to their line of designation for life: yours, I understand, is that of one of the professions. This designation will necessarily direct your attention to intellectual acquirements; and, if I am not mistaken in your taste, I expect you will devote much of your leisure to literature. You will recollect, how frequently I have expatiated on the inestimable privilege bestowed on us by the God of providence, in being born and educated at this period of light and liberty. In every branch of science we feel the advantage; but in the grand science of all, the knowledge of Christian truth and morals, we chiefly triumph over past ages. It behoves us, therefore, carefully to watch over and guard this citadel of our boast and dependance. Its enemies are numerous, both avowed and concealed; it is from the latter I fear most on your account, as they will lie more directly in your path; and unless you are apprized of their existence previous to their attack, you will scarcely fail of injury. Is your

curiosity excited to hear the name of this concealed enemy to Christian faith and morals? Your surprize will be equal when I announce it to be— *Polite Literature*. Yet start not too violently, nor expect that she advances armed at all points, to destroy your best interests. She is a very Proteus in herself; and, by skilful management, may be changed into an useful and engaging friend. I will now elucidate my meaning.

" You admire Homer. I have with pleasure observed your eyes sparkle with delight over his interesting page, and have supposed it the presage of a correct and dignified taste in riper years. Now, what may you learn from this first classic author? Undoubtedly, the first lesson is admiration of valour. This word seems from the representation of the poet, to comprize all that is great and virtuous You read his lofty sentiments as put into the mouths of his heroes—his interesting narrations of their achievements; and his infatuating art of poetical description so delights your imagination, that you forget the sacrifices made to this idol, Valour; of all principle which is really great and virtuous in man. The turpitude of those diabolical passions, cruelty, revenge, &c. &c. seems lessened in your view, when discovered in connection with bravery, and enthusiastic [illegible] love and friendship. The heart imperceptibly becomes hardened to the soft emotions of sympathy; and it is well if contempt is withheld from the heroes of our holy religion, with their meek and lowly Master at their head, while we yield to such fantastic impressions. Those who know best the human heart, are well apprized of the danger resulting from lax views of the turpitude of depraved passions. It is most probably the first step towards actual vice: despise not then, my Cœlebs, this warning of the possibility, even of your favourite Homer becoming a snare. But can you point to no lesson, say you, of improvement in his page? Must I be content to admire what I cannot esteem? Not altogether. There have not been wanting critics who have laboured to adduce moral precept from his heroes; but the attempt in my opinion is ridiculous. Yet these

heroes, though they do not preach lessons of *morality*, in one point of view they do those of *piety*. It is admirable to observe their respect for the gods; the costly rites and ceremonies they practised; their submission to their wills, and their attention to their commands. Homer respects none who contemns Omnipotence. What a lesson of reproof is here. Oh! that our valiant defenders would imitate the heroes they admire, and invoke the Deity they profess to believe in, as frequently and fervently, previous to their warlike undertakings. This description too of their conduct, evinces the *reasonableness* of that principle, which enforces respect, submission, and faith in a Divine Providence; and, if the light given to Heathens was sufficient for such a discovery, how much more reasonable is *our* persuasion, and how much more aggravated *our* neglect and rebellion. While then, my young friend, your innocent curiosity to pry into the system of ancient manners and opinions is gratified by your perusal of the poets of the time, your mind may remain uncorrupted, and even improved, by a just discrimination of the maxims they inculcate.

"Leaving the fascinating study of poetical heroes, you must [illegible] on the more sober detail of real exploits performed by *great men*, the appellation given them by the general consent of the literati; you sit down to the work with an unusual degree of interest, and a confidence of approving what all join in approving. Reversing the too common practice of diving into characters for *faults*, you look chiefly for *excellencies*; for these were the great men, the men of *virtue*, selected from the mass of the human species, to exhibit what human nature is capable of achieving. Amongst these heroes, valour is still the chief virtue; but it is generally associated with more variety of recommendation—Patriotism, magnanimity, disinterestedness, even temperance and a love of justice. To crown all, intellectual talent abounds, their eloquence delights, and their accomplishments surprize us. On the first impression, we almost necessarily ask, Wherefore serveth Christianity? First impressions act on the mind of youth

with a magical force; they cannot easily be prevailed on to reconsider what at the first view appeared self-evident truth. Yet, if they would not be injured by this literary employment, they must reconsider and weigh the characters they admire in an impartial scale. They will then find some of the most splendid actions disgraced by the vilest motives; and virtues so shaded by vices, as to prove the depravity of human nature confined to no age of the world, or description of man. The question then is resolved—Christianity alone can correct the evil, and could have transformed these *great* into *good* men. It is also worthy of remark, that a judgment should not be formed of the mass of society from the conduct of a few individuals. History abundantly proves the general profligacy of manners, though biography may present some exceptions. These observations will apply to your study of the moral philosophers, whose exemplary conduct in many instances, will excite your admiration, and lead you almost to adopt their principles, under the erroneous idea, that if they were generally prevalent, they would be generally beneficial: but the truth is, it required a peculiar turn of mind in those who could embrace their rules:—they were rules only for philosophers, and fitted to particular stations in life, impossible to be occupied by the majority: while it is the glory of our holy religion, to give precepts for the guidance of all, and to adapt itself to every variety of age, and mode of human policy and government. Let not your admiration of these venerable sages, who groping in the dark, by dint of their superiority of intellect discovered rays of truth, lessen your gratitude for that full blaze enjoyed by us more highly favoured. You are aware I am referring to the *wisest* and *best* of the philosophers: for some have been honoured with the name, who are far from deserving it: and here you may remark, that the maxims of those who lived after the introduction of Christianity, are so much purer and rational, as evidently to prove the source from whence they were derived. Can we need a stronger evidence for its necessity and utility? The same lesson of piety may be learnt

from the contemplation of the conduct of real, as of fictitious heroes; and thus we are convinced of the reasonableness of that sentiment, which supposes a Divine superintendance over the concerns of men, the propriety of prayer and thanksgiving, and the duty of resignation. Thus far the heathen world, or the religion of nature teaches us: and we have cause indeed to blush that with all our advantages we are not so *practically* wise as our teachers. It must be acknowledged, indeed, their prayers, and their submission, arose frequently from a slavish fear of their Deities; and their costly sacrifices, made to assuage their wrath, proves their regard to self-interest: but even this conduct, though mistaken in its application, was reasonable in its principle; for our God has revealed himself as an object to fear, and has appointed a sacrfice, by which alone his just indignation can be averted: and shall we fear him less, because he has also revealed himself as an object to love? or disregard his appointed means of propitiation, because its efficacy is certain? The first law of nature, so well understood by these heathens, forbids such conduct. Before I quit this part of my observations, I would point out to your attention a circumstance, which I fear too often escapes that of the admirers of these ancient Sages, and which, if duly thought upon, might tend to bring into repute a doctrine, which lies at the foundation of religious attainments, but which, unhappily, because liable to *abuse*, is less recommended even by some Christian teachers than it ought to be—I mean the doctrine of *Divine influences*. I will mention only a few of these highly gifted men in the science of reason, who held this as a reasonable expectation. The modest Pythagoras, though he wrote nothing but what is called his Golden Verses, has left a memorial of his belief, that agreeably to the Scripture declaration, "Every good gift is from above." In those he says,

"In all thou dost, first let thy prayers ascend;
"And to the gods thy labours first commend,
"From them implore success, and hope a prosp'rous end:

"So shall thy abler mind be taught to soar,
"And wisdom in her secret ways explore:
"To range thro' heaven above, and earth below,
"Immortal Gods, and mortal men to know."

Socrates, said justly to have brought philosophy from heaven, conversing with Aristodemus who doubted of a Providence, addressed him—"O, Aristodemus, apply yourself sincerely to worship God; he will *enlighten* you, and all your doubts will be soon removed." The celebrated scholar, the divine Plato, as he is styled, placed the sovereign good in "a resemblance to the divine nature which can flow from God alone. As nothing is like the sun, but by solar influences, so (says Plato) nothing can resemble God, but by an *emanation* of the divine light into the soul."

"I will not adduce evidence from the many philosophers contemporary or subsequent to the publication of Christianity, in support of this doctrine, because the sentiment could not fairly be called their own: but as their consent argues the reasonableness of the sentiment, it is worthy of our regard. From this period, many of the best philosophers were converted to the Christian faith, and became Christian Fathers. The history of ancient nations will also bear testimony to this important article of our faith. The Chaldeans, who claim the highest antiquity for their religious traditions, say, "The human soul will be filled with a superior light and illumination, and (as it were) transported out of herself." The Egyptians declare, amongst other sayings, to the same effect—"We cannot speak rightly of the Divine mind, unless we are *illuminated by his light*: for the Divine mind is the fountain of light, as well as of goodness." The Persians furnish us with a specimen of prayer, in which the Deity is invoked to irradiate the heart with his light. The Chinese speaking of the supreme God, who they call *Tien*, describe him as piercing into the bottom of the heart, as light into a dark room. "We must," say they, "endeavour to correspond to his lights, as a musical instrument perfectly tuned. We must

unite ourselves to him, as two pieces of marble that seem but one, receive from his hand so soon as he opens it. He *enlightens* us continually." Even the Hindoo, and the American Indian, whose immense continent was peopled by various nations at distant periods, carry some traces of the doctrine of Divine influences. Revelation then, in this instance, has only confirmed what reason dictated; but it has added something of infinite importance—a gracious promise that this heavenly illumination will be afforded to all who seek for it in the *appointed way*; for, mark the words of Incarnate Truth—after declaring the readiness of our heavenly Father to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask it—he adds, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father, in *my name, believing*, ye shall receive."

"I return to the enumeration of more dangers in your literary progress, which by no means lessen as you advance. We naturally form the strongest attachments to those authors from whom we derive the most pleasure; and especially in the subject of history. Unless the historian delights us by the ease and correctness of his style, we languish over his pages, and feel a secret prejudice towards his well-meant, though dull conceived arguments. On the other hand, we almost, against our better judgment, acquiesce in those of our lively and agreeable author. Unhappily, some of our best written histories have proceeded from the pens of those who are avowedly the enemies of Christianity; consequently, their representations and arguments, in all cases where that is concerned, should be received with caution. For want of this, numbers of our youth have rested their opinion of Christian faith and practice, on a Hume, and a Gibbon, instead of their Bibles; and have insensibly been betrayed into the path of Deism, by the mere power of *just* reasoning upon *false* premises.

"You will arrive at still more dangerous ground when you open the pages of the Christian divine, and the Christian moralist; for your veneration becomes stronger, and your confidence is entire. Here, you exclaim, all will, at least, wear the garb of Scripture

language, and breathe some air from its spirit, to quicken my cold affections, and establish my wavering faith. Alas! you may be disappointed. The divine and the moralist, like yourself, may have drunk so deeply of the stream of learning, as to need a renovating draught from that well of *living water*, which *Jesus* alone can give. It is well if you are only disappointed on this discovery; but, it is to be feared, numbers have reasoned thus:— Where is the great importance of the *doctrines* of Christianity, if they are not made the prominent feature in the discourses of the divine? and what a noble superstructure has been raised by the moralist without their aid for his foundation!—Possibly, the divine and the moralist, whom we justly blame for their partial instructions, may have yet dropped hints sufficient to warrant our hope, that they were themselves partakers of the true faith of the gospel: but how lamentable was that lukewarmness they possessed, and how dangerous in its consequences. While then, my young friend, you throw the veil of candour over their conduct, in consideration of those peculiar temptations by which they might have been assailed, never, for a moment, suppose the importance of truth can be lessened, or the union which God himself has established between faith and precept be dissolved. These are a few of the dangers you must expect to meet in the direct path of what is styled polite literature: but if you make excursions, your perils will greatly increase. There is a numerous class of writers, who, though only "bubbles on the rapid stream of time," attract notice and admiration as they sail along: and this class, unhappily, are too frequently enlisted in the cause of Scepticism, if not open Infidelity. They are sometimes dressed in the garb of wit, and thus easily find the way to creep into periodical publications, if not able to display their abilities in the more copious form of a pamphlet, or a poem. They obtain from their conciseness the regard of the majority, who are fond of light reading: and thus the contagion they carry, spreads itself far and wide. The men of wisdom, capable of confuting their arguments, seldom hear of them; while the

ignorant and the credulous are caught in their agreeable snare: for here rests the advantage obtained by such writers—they please and flatter our natural dispositions.

"And now, my young friend, I would fain study rules for your adoption, to wage war against these literary enemies; but no study or invention of mine can supply any likely to prove so efficacious as those already supplied. They are comprized in one short sentence—"*Put ye on the whole armour of God.*" Referring you to that beautiful description of this armour contained in the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and earnestly reecommending you to the use of it, I remain

Your most sincere friend,

Y.

CHAP. VI.

As the inexperienced mariner surveys his chart previously to his launching on the tempestuous ocean, believing the existence of every quicksand, rock, and vortex, yet animated with a lively hope that he shall escape them all; so I carefully perused the letter inserted in my last, and valued it chiefly as a memorial of my late preceptor's affection. My attention was soon engrossed by a new study; for my Aunt hearing from the niece of a very learned gentleman, that nothing was deemed of so much importance at the University as the knowledge of mathematics, placed me at a seminary where that branch of education was most attended to. Here, I insensibly lost my habit of sober reflection amongst the wild excursions of abstruse speculations, and amused myself by turns with the truths of mathematical demonstration. At the age of eighteen, I became a candidate for academic honours, and appeared in trembling hope before

the awful tribunal of professional examiners. Having passed the fiery ordeal with considerable eclat, I sat myself down to the long neglected work of serious reflection: a theme had been given me for discussion on the subject of fortitude; and before I seized the pen for the accomplishment of the task, I reasoned thus—The wisdom of any individual in the consideration of a subject proposed, is most feelingly exhibited by the application of it to his own particular circumstances: he who feels his subject writes best, and is the most likely to affect his readers. How then can I treat this subject so justly, as by *writing* in *character*?

A Christian divine must argue upon his own principles, by the same rule that any artist would instruct by the rudiments of his own science. Away, then, with all ingenious speculations on the abstract nature of this cardinal virtue. I will consider only its *duty*, its *privilege*, and its *reward*. I paused, as it were in thought—a sudden flash of conviction darting across my mind, and saying, where has thine own fortitude lain so long? while caught in the trammels of school attainments, thou hast fallen into temptations. They have diverted thy attention from the sacred volume;

they have driven thee more or less every day from secret prayer; they have engaged thy mind while in the outward act of public worship; and if *thy* heart has thus failed thee in the Christian warfare, what encouragement canst thou hold out for the attainment of this virtue, so reasonable in its duty, so high in its privileges, and so secure in its reward? Like the mariner I have just compared myself to, who laid aside his chart till the winds blew and the waves roared around him, I took my long neglected Bible in my hand, and marked the various passages where the Christian graces are promised as *gifts*—while the humiliating sense of my own frailty, taught me the impossibility of possessing fortitude of the noblest kind, from mere human efforts.

A few hours completed my task so much to my own satisfaction, that I waited for its presentation with more impatience than anxiety. I had no doubt of my tutor's approbation of reasonings founded on the unerring words of eternal truth.

Judge, then, sympathizing reader, of my sensations, when after hemming thrice, and wiping his spectacles, my learned examiner observed—"This subject, young man, is not treated exactly as it ought to have been."

With a faltering accent, I replied—"Where, Sir, rests its defects?" "I by no means wish to discourage you," returned he, "you are new to these things, and cannot be expected to argue like old schoolmen. The energy of your style does you credit; and for this I can perceive you are more indebted to feeling than to care, there being an air of negligence diffused over the whole composition." "If that be all," eagerly interrupted I, "it will be easy to amend it: like Johnson, I will revise, and *re*-revise." "Mere revisal won't do," resumed the scholar, "the essay is *radically* defective."

As the nod of Jove is declared by the poet to have shaken Olympus, so was my heart, my head, and my spirits shaken; yet the strong vital spark of curiosity bore me up in the presence of my critic, and my powers, though shaken, were not destroyed. I boldly requested a full explanation of his meaning, in the expression, that my essay was radically defective. The defect, returned my tutor, is simply this: you have founded your arguments and illustrations on *scripture principles*—now *we* lay them quite aside when we reason upon any subject. They are only adapted for vulgar minds, and are besides, too common-

place; as being well known, and open to general comprehension. I ventured to plead the apology of my designation to the office of a Christian minister—but received for answer, that was no reason, since all academies went through the same rules. I boldly suggested the necessity of being early accustomed to reason in the manner to which utility would be attached in later years; to which I was only answered by a smile. I timidly questioned, whether my example of fortitude, the first martyr, St. Stephen, was not well chosen —and was answered, by no means; the same objection lying against scriptural *examples*, as scriptural *arguments*. "But," added my instructor, "don't be discouraged, your talents, directed by more scholastic rules will raise you to notice; forget (as far as relates to argument and composition), your Bible, and I have little doubt of your success. It will be time enough for you to arrange texts when composing sermons, if indeed you wish to take that unnecessary trouble upon yourself." I felt surprized at the concluding sentence, not being at that time in the possession of clerical secrets; and replied, "I should certainly aim to excel in the composition and delivery of my sermons, having no other dependance for

eminence in my profession." "O young man," rejoined the tutor, "you look up to a bishopric I presume; but if you have not the regular path before you, no bye paths of eloquence and fine composition will lead you to it."

The chapel bell summoned me from the presence of my tutor. I had already caught the contagion of aversion to this daily task of attendance on prayer-reading, from readers evidently averse themselves to the office, and a transition from my present to my future feelings was natural. The sentence pronounced by my tutor, that no intellectual attainments would lead me to church preferment, sunk deeply in my mind, as I knelt, surrounded by my young fellow collegians, whose countenances indicated as much indifference as my own to the service before us. What, mused I to myself, must I be a Curate to read this dull lesson of words, while my master wins the prize of eloquence, purchased for him by his wealth or nobility? Such musings were the effect of ignorance; for alas! our rich and noble-born rectors, have transfersed their rights of *preaching*, as well as *praying*, and left us also another cause of regret—that while they are content to stamp such importance of office on their servants, they have

not proportioned a just reward to their services.

In the height of ill humour, I took up my pen on my return from chapel duties, and wrote a few lines to my Aunt, in which I expressed, for the first time in my life, (being the first I had ever experienced the sensation), a concern for the poverty of my condition. I argued with a splenetic firmness against learning, when no theatre presented for its display; and concluded my epistle, with the hasty resolution expressed to abandon my present pursuits, and enter on some others more suitable, as I imagined, to my pecuniary resources. A few days brought me a reply to the following purport; for having destroyed the original letter, I cannot present my readers with my Aunt's exact style and orthography.

She intreated me to be in no haste to quit my studies for the reason I mentioned, since it was possible the necessity might not exist, and I might be enabled to purchase a handsome church preferment. She informed me the grounds on which she built her fears for my slender provision, which was the circumstance of my father's property being in the hands of an old friend of his, who was a presbyterian, and, consequently, agreeably to the

old adage, might be expected to play a few "presbyterian tricks." She acknowledged that he had paid all my expenses with great readiness, and declared himself willing to render me a satisfactory statement, when I was of age to demand it. She accounted for my never having seen this friend, from the circumstance of a quarrel having arisen between the gentleman and herself on their first interview, when I was committed to her care at three years of age. She recommended me now to pay him a visit, and endeavour to obtain particulars of my real state of pecuniary resource; at the same time cautioning me against being caught in any religious trap he might lay for me, and also a matrimonial one, which she thought equally to be expected; for she was informed he had a daughter about my own age, to whom, if my fortune was really considerable, he would doubtless wish to unite me.

The above intelligence wrought a change of sentiment in my mind, and I cheerfully pursued my course of academical studies, in the sanguine expectation that no presbyterian tricks would deprive me of my partrimony; for I recollected a sentiment often repeated by my late preceptor, that it was uncandid to

attach general censure to particular persons of any nation, sect, or party.

When my first vacation drew near, I wrote to my guardian requesting permission to visit him, and was immediately favoured with an answer written by his daughter. The young lady in a style of great propriety, expressed her father's desire of seeing me; and her concern that ill health had obliged him to employ her as his amanuensis on this occasion. I smiled as I folded up the neat epistle, recollecting my prudent Aunt's hint of *matrimonial traps*—here was one of the lady's recommendations displayed already.

Those persons who are loth to confess the humiliating doctrine of human depravity, dwell largely on the effects of bad education and evil company; and certainly their severest animadversions on these two sources of corruption are well founded: but it is a question of great importance to know, the reason *why* the human heart becomes so susceptible of corruption, and how it happens, too frequently, that the best educated, and the best associated, are also corrupt in principle and action. This question fairly investigated, brings us back to the axiom we wish to disbelieve, although a scriptural one, namely—that out

of the *heart* proceeds all evil. I am now arrived at the point in my history, which does, I think, exemplify the foregoing observation. In *my* heart was deeply planted the seeds of ambition and emulation. Now at a first thought, perhaps, my readers may start at my opinion, that I account these seeds essential to the existence of a great character, and would no more attempt their extirpation, than I would the passions of love, joy, or hope. It was their association with meaner seeds, if I may so express myself, which destroyed their beauty when they sprang up to public view, and gave them the fatal power to endanger my soul.

> ...." Man *must* soar:
> An obstinate activity within,
> An insuppressive spring, *will* toss him up
> In spite of fortune's load—
> And why? Because immortal as their Lord;
> And souls immortal must for ever heave
> At something great; the glitter or the gold;
> The praise of mortals, or the praise of heaven."

I had not been many weeks at college before these principles received that wrong direction, which has caused me to mourn in riper years; and against which I wish to sound the trumpet of warning on these pages,

should they meet the eye of a youth of similar dispositions. I have briefly related the substance of a conversation with my learned tutor, for whose judgment I had formed the highest respect, and whose favour I greatly desired. The pride of my heart led me to an ardent thirst for the notice of the wise and powerful; but my judgment was too weak to estimate the character of true wisdom, when placed in opposition to "vain deceits, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." My ambitious spirit, which had been directed by my first tutor towards the attainment of moral and religious worth, was by my last thrown into a new channel.—Academical honours was the watch-word which animated every breast, where a spark of genius was bestowed. The way to acquire them was clearly marked, but it was rugged, being the way of "much study," which "is a weariness to the flesh." In so tiresome and difficult a way, one might reasonably expect the scholar would be grateful for every assistance, and avail himself of the most easy method to solve a problem, to determine the propriety of an hypothesis, or the truth of a supposed fact. How admirably is the Bible

adapted to answer these several ends. Do we ask the nature of God? we are answered, "God is a spirit." Do we inquire into the nature and manner of our required worship? we are answered, they who worship God, must worship him in spirit and in truth, saying, "Our Father who art in heaven." Do we wish information as respects our *own* nature and designation? we are informed of our creation in the image of our Creator, and for the purpose of glorifying Him. Do we need rules for the attainment of this purpose? we are instructed in the extent of moral obligation, and the nature of saving faith. These are the important questions which agitate the mind: witness the various systems of philosophers,—founded on their favourite maxim, that truth was intended for private entertainment. Consequently, their purest hypothesis could not benefit society at large. This radical defect in all human systems is unknown to the Christian. The fountain of truth revealed it to the common people, and "they heard him gladly." And do we wish the testimony of historians and biographers in our researches; where can we trust with so much confidence as to the sacred page? It contains the most ancient records, guarded by a jea-

lousy unknown to any other, the wonder-working providence of God himself, working with the carefulness of man. If this be a true statement of the aid the Bible is capable of communicating to the studious, to what cause can their neglect of it be assigned? Are we not compelled to trace it to the same source which actuates the sensual and the worldly-minded to the same neglect—even the opposition of the heart to its self-denying precepts? It were comparatively of small moment, if the studious were content to *labour* only more intensely from their contempt of scripture. But alas! this dereliction is followed by evils of a far more serious nature. The general habit of manners must be influenced by that of thinking; and the very *pleasures* of a college life are influenced by its learning. As the mind loses its susceptibility of the sublime truths of revelation, it imbibes a sensual taste in company, amusements, and occupations; and thus our universities become a snare, instead of a protection to the morals of our youth.

I had naturally a share of prudence beyond my years, and when I entered the apartments selected for my residence, I arranged my expenses suitably; but no sooner was I induced

to change the principles on which I *studied*, than a carelessness of action took place; and I have to mourn over the consequences of College extravagancies which I contributed to produce. I must digress a little from my narration, to enlarge on this theme.—I have seen an aged brother possessed of considerable church preferment die *insolvent*, from an inability to discharge *College debts*. I have seen an amiable Curate uncomfortable, though blessed with all the necessaries of life, because deprived of those luxuries in which, for a few years at College he indulged himself: and I have beheld the effects produced on society by each of these characters. I have heard the contemptuous sneer of the enemies to the priestly character, in the first instance; and the surprise of all, that contentment was not the portion of a teacher of righteousness, in the last. I have witnessed too, the private feelings of the domestic circle in both instances:—The foreboding fears of the tender wife and fond mother, as she meditated over the fading countenance of her aged partner; and heard the sigh of an anxious parent, as report announced the expenditures, with difficulty supplied by the hand of careful industry.

Thus did my contemplative spirit muse and

lament over the existing evils of our Universities, when a ray of hope dissipated, in some measure, the cheerless prospect; for have not the present heads of these seminaries of learning avowed themselves patrons of the Sacred Volume?—Oh may the blessed spirit of consistency descend and dwell amongst them; then will the prophetic vision of the poet be realized:—

> "I see the fountains purg'd! whence life derives
> A clear or turbid flow; see the young mind
> Not fed impure by chance, by flattery fool'd,
> Or by scholastic jargon bloated proud;
> But fill'd and nourish'd by the light of truth.
> Then beam'd thro' fancy the refining ray,
> And pouring on the heart, the passions feel
> At once informing light, and moving flame;
> Till moral, public, graceful action crown
> The whole. Behold, the fair contention glows
> In all that mind or body can adorn,
> And form to life. Instead of barren heads,
> Barbarian pedants, wrangling sons of pride,
> And truth-perplexing metaphysic wits;
> Men, patriots, chiefs, and citizens are form'd."

My adherence to, and imitation of extravagant associates, soon induced the necessity of a second letter to my Aunt, in which I honestly confessed I had ran to greater lengths in expenditure than I deemed fully defensible; but trusted to her clemency for par-

don, and the strength of my own finances. A speedy answer was given, containing an assurance of the former, and a convincing argument in favour of the latter, by the sight of a handsome remittance. To add still more to my self-complacency under such proofs of imprudence, a few lines were added to my Aunt's epistle by my fair young Cousin, in which she rallied me on my loss of prudence, and expressed her satisfaction to learn I was not likely to turn pedant, which she had feared would be the case; and hoped I should mix in all the gaieties by which I was surrounded.

To those readers who have felt the force of female influence, it will be unnecessary to explain my sensations: they will tremble for my moral safety, when the beloved guardians of that safety relax in their admonitory duty. But I hasten from the painful task of retrospection: though I avow an impartial statement of my follies, I shrink from the minutia of detail. Closing, therefore, my communication of College adventures, I propose, in my next, to introduce my readers to the acquaintance of my guardian, to whose house I repaired immediately on the commencement of my first vacation.

CHAP. VII.

There are few occurrences in the common affairs of life more unpleasing to a reserved temper, than an introduction to strangers; but, my disposition not being of this cast, I entered the carriage designed to convey me to the house of my guardian, with an impatient wish for its arrival. I had previously gained a few particulars from my Aunt respecting the family, and was informed that Mr. W. was formerly a merchant, and that had retired from business about eight years, with his wife and four daughters. Associating the idea of literature with a taste for retirement, I anticipated an intelligent companion in my guardian, and imagined it probable, that the same intelligence might extend to the females of the family.

The carriage stopped at a respectable looking house, near a populous village, and I was ushered into the presence of Mrs. W. and her three youngest daughters, seated at a work-

table. The general air of elegant neatness apparent in their persons, and every thing around them, was extremely prepossessing; whilst a dejection, seated in their countenances, alarmed my fears for the state of the absent master of the mansion. On enquiry, I received the melancholy intelligence of his increasing indisposition, which left no expectation of his recovery, though life might be protracted for a few months. "Yet," observed Mrs. W. "we sorrow not as those without hope." "I have, Madam," said I, "learnt from my Aunt, that my guardian is a religious character:" "and, therefore, lost his reputation with her," rejoined she. "The great dispute between them, and for which she forbade him her house, was a difference of opinion respecting the choice of your baptismal sponsors; she selecting the most wealthy of her friends, and Mr. W. recommending the most pious of his. The end, however, which was lost apparently, was gained effectually; for you was placed under the care of the worthy clergyman desired for your godfather: and I have heard your now dying guardian exult over his able contrivances in this arrangement, more than in the most prosperous event in his life. But I will not detain you from his pre-

sence. The prospect of your arrival to-day, has animated his spirits, and he is seated in his chair of audience, as he humorously terms his bolstered couch. Dispatching her youngest daughter to announce my arrival, in a few minutes Mrs. W. led the way to the apartment; the words of the poet occurring to my memory—

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
> "Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
> "Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

In an anti-room, close to my guardian's bed-chamber, was seated his eldest daughter at the harpsichord, on which she had just been playing her father's favourite piece:—

> "I know that my Redeemer liveth."—

Now, I suspect some of my readers are more anxious for my description of the young lady, than the old gentleman; and they will be disappointed when I inform them, she possessed no attractions either of person or manners. This being the case, I paid my respects at the moment of introduction, with as much *sang froid*, as too many of my sex would have done, estimating the value of acquaintance with ladies, in proportion to their power of delighting the eye.

Though greatly altered in size and complexion, I recognized in the person of my guardian, a well-known friend. "What," I exclaimed, as I seized the trembling hands extended towards me, "are you the Mr. W——, who as the visitor of my Reverend Tutor, so often noticed me with acts of kindness?" A general smile was diffused over the countenances of the family circle, who had each followed me into the apartment, to witness my agreeable surprise. "Oh, my dear Cœlebs," returned Mr. W——, wiping away the falling tears from his eyes, "it has been a subject of great thankfulness to me, that by dint of a little prudent management, I have been enabled to keep you under my guardianship so much. But I have been under the necessity of losing sight of you of late—Say if my constant prayers for your spiritual good have been answered. The paleness of your countenance, I trust, is merely the result of studious confinement." Scarcely any question could be more embarrassing to me, who knew so little of Christian experience; yet my worthy friend looked as though he would be answered. After a short pause, I replied, he gave me too much credit for study, and that I feared I had formed some acquaintances lately, who had retard-

ed, rather than advanced, what might be termed spiritual interests. As might be expected, many excellent remarks were dropped on the subject of youthful association, both from Mr. and Mrs. W——, and I heard with the intention of profit, when, as I said, I should have left college, and thus have shaken off my present companions. "Yet," returned Mr. W——, "I can shew you a more excellent way. Let me reccommend you to preach your first sermon on your return to College; I will furnish you with a subject. Tell them you were admitted into the arcana of a dying man—Of one, who in his youth tasted of all those pleasures they are pursuing; but, finding them unsatisfying, renounced them before they had communicated a deadly poison to the soul: and then add the happy result—a peaceful conscience, and a lively hope of that heaven, which is promised only to the righteous."

"Ah! my dear Sir," replied I, "would that you, like the pious Addison, could summons each of them to see how a Christian can die." "Were that in my power," returned Mr. W——, "I should not have the temerity to make the summons. I am not certain what temptations or trials may await that solemn

hour. I can only say, the will of God be done. If clouds and darkness should then surround me, the fewer witnesses the better; and if it be his holy will that I should triumph in the face of the king of terrors, he will appoint the spectators. But, my dear Cœlebs, you have it in your power to shew a more striking picture to your young friends, than my dying pillow—I mean the effect it may produce on your future conduct. The example of youth will weigh more than the voice of years in many cases."

I was too sincere to gratify my pious friend with a promise of compliance. The "dread laugh," arose to my imagination in all the formidable shapes which nothing but truth can combat, and that prevailing power had not yet taken possession of my soul. I evaded an answer, by observing, how happy would my lot be as a clergyman, were I often called to visit sick chambers like the one I now found myself in. "Suppose," replied Mr. W——, "I had sent for you for the purpose of a pastoral visit, how would you address me?" "I should, undoubtedly," returned I, "congratulate you on the review you were enabled to take of your past life, and point to the glorious reward awaiting you in the blissful

regions of eternity." "But suppose," returned Mr. W——, "that I was in so humble a frame of spirit, that I could take no satisfactory view of my past life, though all around me were descanting on its excellence; and, consequently, my hopes of possessing the heavenly inheritance had grown faint and obscure." "In such a case," replied I, "I should lay the blame on the weakness of your bodily powers, which necessarily affects the strength of our mental, and should aim to reason you out of such ill-grounded suspicions; and I should fervently pray, that your affliction in this respect might be removed, and that you might possess joy and peace in believing." "And is this all that you could do for me?" questioned my pious friend. I answered by a recurrence of the question, "What more could I do, my dear Sir?" "I will tell you, my dear young friend, in a short sentence—You should preach your Divine Master on every occasion where your presence is requested in your ministerial character." "How am I to understand you?" replied I. "Am I to be always teaching the first rudiments of Christianity? To inform experienced Christians of the person and work of their Saviour, I should deem unnecessary." "Ah, Cœlebs," replied my friend, "you betray an ignorance

of Christian experience. Be assured, there cannot exist a case where there is no necessity for exhibiting the person and offices of the Redeemer. To the unawakened sinner, he must be pointed out as the only refuge from the wrath he merits to the timid and doubtful, as the Author and Finisher of faith: to the tempted, as a brother suffering also temptation, that he might be made the succourer of those who are tempted. to the obstinately impenitent, as their righteous Judge. and to the dying Christian, the minister of Jesus must display him standing at the right hand of God, having opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

My pious guardian paused, as reaching the climax of devout feeling; and his anxious family proposed our retiring, from a fear of exhausting his small remnant of strength; but he resumed his remarks. "Mistake me not, dear youth, from this statement of your clerical duty, as though I imagined the exhibition of a Saviour was to be the boundary of your instructions. Remember, the salvation of sinners is a *finished* work; and never forget in your laudable zeal to display what their Lord has done *for* them, what he also does *in* them. This part of your ministry will necessarily

lead you into an enlargement on practical piety, and holy dispositions. The hypocritical professor may turn away in disgust; but rely on the readiness of every sincere disciple, to listen to an equal display of the duties and privileges of a Christian. From extensive perusal of writers on divinity, and intercourse with ministers, I am qualified to judge of effects likely to be produced by various methods of exhibiting Scripture truths. I have seen a taste for reading and hearing only the sublime and highly spiritual, degenerate into wild speculations and abstraction from relative duties. I have beheld a reasoning spirit and departure from the simplicity of faith, productive of error, or become captious and controversial. I have known the pious care of writers and preachers, in guarding, as they have termed it, the sacred truths of a free gospel, productive of despair on their readers and hearers: and I have known more numerous instances, where an *unguarded* display of the same sacred truths, has engendered spiritual pride, and fatal presumption. I do not mention these difficulties in the Christian ministry, as motives of discouragement: you may exclaim with an apostle—"Who is sufficient for these things!" He will give you the

satisfactory answer—'Our sufficiency is of God.' Relying on the grace which is made perfect in weakness, the Christian minister may boldly go forth, after earnestly imploring divine assistance, fearless of the awful charge preferred against the prayerless and careless speaker, of darkening counsel by words without knowledge."

Mrs. W— closed the subject by remarking, that the duty of a minister being so arduous, the strong language of St. Paul was strikingly appropriate, when addressing the Roman converts he said—"I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

Leaving my pious guardian to necessary repose, I spent the remainder of the evening with the ladies in cheerful and rational conversation. The domestic circle I had last visited, in every leading particular, was diametrically opposite to the present; but I was chiefly impressed by the contrast of conduct in Mrs. W— towards her daughters. It was evident she considered them as friends and companions, and to that cause I ascribed the affectionate expressions of their looks and demeanour towards her. Doubtless, this cir-

cumstance endeared her society, but they were previously indebted for the formation of their characters to her wise and prudent government of their infant years. Mrs. W— had ever lived *in*, and *for* her family—she was fully competent to the task of educating her daughters in all improvement of mind, and she preferred the tuition of private instructors in the ornamental branches of learning, to the risk of much moral evil by a separation from her constant watchfulness. Unlike in every sentiment to my vain Godmother, she introduced her daughters as early as possible, to the acquaintances she selected as the most likely to promote their growth in piety; the leading trait in her own character, and in the promotion of which in her daughters, she was greatly aided by the example of their father.

I was now to verify in my own experience the truth of Solomon's remark—"It is better to go to the house of mourning than of feasting." I entered this house in a trifling spirit; but I found it impossible to retain it, and in a few days I became assimilated to the temper and manners of the inhabitants. I passed many hours of each day in the chamber of my affectionate friend, reading to amuse him,

some pious author, or receiving instructions from his lips, rendered doubly interesting by the awful situation in which they were delivered. I could here relate these interesting conversations, and also form an episode of the daily conduct, benevolent visits, and diversified behaviour of Mrs. W— and her daughters; but I possess the common vanity of the narrator of his own life, and cannot but imagine, that my readers had rather hear me do what I like best to do—namely, talk of myself. I shall therefore inform them, that after spending one week with my guardian, and another with my respected tutor, I adjourned to the house of my Aunt, which I considered still as my appropriate and only home. Perhaps, I may be charged by some of my fair readers with a degree of insensibility when I avow, that I quitted the circle of amiable young ladies with a heart as freely my own as when I entered their society. The cause I attribute to a sort of axiom I had formed for my choice of a companion in the married state—that *personal* beauty must be united to *mental;* and as neither of my guardian's daughters possessed the smallest pretensions to this necessary qualification, they were of course disregarded.

It was late in the evening when I arrived at my Aunt's. Carriages were waiting at her door, and all wore the air of some splendid entertainment. It was my Aunt's rout, and she hobbled out of her drawing-room to welcome me, and request the change of my travelling dress and introduction to the circle. I begged to decline her wishes, alleging depression of spirits, occasioned by scenes I had lately witnessed. She frowned terribly upon me, which confirmed my purpose, and wishing her a good night, I instantly retired to my apartment. I mention this trifling incident by way of caution to my fair readers, for I do most confidently assure them, that their smiles, at all ages, is the surest method of carrying a point with their male friends or relations. Scarcely was I retired to solitude, than I regretted my resolution; for by this conduct I had delayed for many hours, the gratification which a sight of my Cousin Lucy ever afforded me. In the absence of an esteemed object, the mind is occupied in thinking about it. I was situated in the room formerly appropriated to our nursery. The furniture had undergone a complete metamorphose; the walls, instead of coloured staining, were handsomely papered, and one thing

only survived the change—it was a handsome painting suspended over the fire-place, representing our portraits taken at an early age.—we were drawn hand in hand, casting a look of sweet complacency on each other. Though I had glanced my eye a thousand times over this picture, I never till this moment fixed on it the eye of my mind. Sweet image of childish simplicity, thought I, well do I recollect the attitude in which we were placed by the artist—just so we looked, just so we felt. What! if it was prophetic of the same attitude in a more solemn place! And why should it not? Have I ever seen a woman I could compare with Lucy, and have I not every reason to suppose I am beloved by her? A thousand confirmations of this flattering hope rushed on my recollection, and following one idea after another, I fixed on the resolution of declaring myself the lover of my amiable Cousin previously to my next return to College.

It was late before the company retired, and the bustle they occasioned, added to my own interesting reflections, banished sleep from my eyes. I arose at an early hour to enjoy a solitary walk in my Aunt's beautiful garden; and plucking a sprig of jessamine which

grew under the window of my Cousin's apartment, proceeded on my way. I had not passed many minutes alone, when forth from the door I had quietly opened, sprang my Lucy, and with her usual simplicity, flew into the arms ever extended to receive her. "So you thought to steal a walk alone," she exclaimed, "yet ventured to ruffle the leaves under my window; and with all your College learning, you have not learnt obedience to your Aunt, who invited you into the circle last night; now I am come forth to enquire the reason, and to scold you into better manners."

My readers are in possession of my secret resolution to avow myself the lover of my Cousin previously to my return to College; and, according to their various opinions of matrimonial hesitation, will they grant me the award of censure or approbation; but truth obliges me to confess a conduct, which I would fain hope will receive censure from every reader. Truth obliges me to say, that enchanted by the lovely person and engaging manner of my Cousin, I suffered her not to remain one hour in my company, before I ventured to entrust my future happiness into her hands, and explicitly avow an attach-

ment, on which I had not reflected a single day. With a becoming reserve, Lucy promised only to consider my proposal, and consult her mother, into whose presence we were summoned by the approach of the breakfast-hour.

The countenance of my Aunt still partook somewhat of the displeased air of the evening separation; but feeling it now essential to my interest to dissipate impressions, I assumed my kindest and most respectful manners, and dashed at once into a subject which I judged would please her best—the security of my pecuniary prospects. I informed her of the exact account rendered by my guardian, and his excellent management of my property, together with the extent of its amount; at which last intelligence she stopped the pouring of her tea-pot, and handing us our cups half filled, exclaimed, "You amaze me, Cœlebs! I rejoice to hear you are so much richer than I expected." Had I wisely known where to have stopped in my communications, this breakfast-hour would have passed serenely over; but not contented with receiving my Aunt's warm congratulations, I had the temerity to expect a recantation of her error, in the supposition of dishonesty on

the part of my guardian. I received a *qualified* recantation in the words—"He has acted honestly by *you* there is no doubt, but you cannot tell how he may act by other people." The blood mounted to my cheek at the sentence. "Base insinuation!" I exclaimed, forgetting at the moment the person of the insinuator. My Aunt opened her eyes, and brought me to my recollection. "I beg pardon," resumed I, "but really a spirit of bigotry is inexcusable, where an opportunity is afforded for investigation into the principles of those persons against whom it is levelled. O, that *you* could witness the scenes I have lately witnessed, then would your admiration of Christian virtues excite a noble comtempt of party names, and minor distinctions among Christian brethren."

My Aunt rang her bell, and ordered the removal of breakfast; then took three turns with an agitated step across the room, drawing a chair near to mine, again seated herself, and with a dignified air partaking of sternness, thus addressed me—"Cœlebs, an opportunity is now afforded me of speaking my mind on a subject which has given me much uneasiness, and I expect from you an explicit reply to the question I propose. I ask you,

what is your opinion of those monsters of iniquity, who murdered the best of kings, and suffered the usurpation of the vile wretch at the head of their party." "My dear Aunt," I replied, "you are disqualified for the office of a judge, however you may be fitted for that of an inquisitor; but as I am an honest juryman, I will not be influenced by the epithets you have applied. Towards the few individuals who were actually the cause of the crime in question, I feel abhorrence. They were, as our church expresses it, 'cruel and unreasonable men.' Respecting the real character of the usurper, I must maintain a suspension of opinion. He was either an ambitious politician, or an honest enthusiast; we must leave him to the only searcher of hearts." "Well," resumed my Aunt, "I am glad you see it in the same light so far; now I have only to ask, are not the Dissenters of our day the descendants of those cruel and unreasonable men; and "like father, like son," is a well-known proverb." "Again, I must remark, my dear Madam," returned I, "you are as bad a logician, as you are a judge. Your proverb is not an axiom, nor do I imagine the majority of our Dissenters can proudly boast their genealogy from the assertors of their civil and religious

liberties." "I see, Cœlebs," replied my Aunt, "you are disposed to ridicule, and think contemptibly in these matters, nor shall I attempt to answer the hard words of your College learning; but, let me tell you, a much wiser person than you or I, advanced a sentiment in my parish church last fast-day, which ought to make us tremble, and exert every nerve against the encouragement of Dissenters. Mr. —— counted over our national sins, I forget the others he mentioned; but this I never shall forget: he said, that the times reminded him of those in which our King was martyred by the fanatics, who, like those of the present day, separated themselves from the only true church, and so were permitted to fall into the devices of Satan; and then he almost wept, as he deprecated the vengeance of heaven against this crying sin of the nation." "Alas!" exclaimed I, "that good men should thus torment their minds with imaginary evils, and cut themselves off from the enjoyments of true Christian fellowship; whilst their ill-directed zeal to lessen the evils they deplore, does, in fact, increase them. The intolerant spirit of a parish priest has laid the foundation-stone of many a dissenting edifice."

My fair Cousin, who had hitherto maintained

silence, now very unwittingly aimed to close this debate by observing, she thought it could be of no importance what church we frequented, so long as we discharged the duties of our stations. Delighted with her sentiment, I echoed it with a warmth of feeling highly offensive to my Aunt, who looking sternly upon us both, lamented she should live to see the day, when the two most dear to her were forgetting the church in which they were educated. She then remarked, it must be from me that Lucy had imbibed such indifference, adding, that she supposed this had been the theme of our conversation this morning. The confusion of countenance her hint occasioned, at the recollection of what had really been the subject of our discourse, confirmed her suspicions; and she proceeded in her harangue, till my temper, naturally irritable, was roused, and I made rejoinders in terms not becoming my years and relationship: the result was my Aunt's retreat from the apartment in much anger and menace of resentment.

Alone with my fair Cousin, I lamented my behaviour, and that at so critical a juncture; but, before we could consult on measures to counteract the effects I dreaded,

she received orders from a servant to attend in her mother's dressing-room. "Let me see you again," said I, "as soon as possible." An acquiescent smile infused hope as I paced the room impatiently waiting her return.

An hour restored Lucy again to my presence with the same smiling aspect. "You will meet my mother," said she, "at dinner, with an unclouded brow; she has forgiven you already." "How have you effected the reconciliation?" returned I, "but I need not ask, you are of the peace-making sex." Thus shall it ever be with my Lucy—she will turn my wayward humours, she will sooth my care-worn heart; and, in return, she shall control my actions, and share my every joy.

And now I must commit an unpardonable offence towards my novel-reading friends, by closing a dialogue probably more to their taste, than any other I may in my next chapter be able to supply. Indulging however, a hope that the majority of my readers are not novel-admirers, I will not anticipate general displeasure on the present pause of communication.

CHAP. VIII.

HAVING avowed myself the friend of truth, and reprobated that system of deceit exhibited in my Aunt's conduct towards me in my boyish days, it may reasonably be expected that I should seek to avoid similar errors in my present communications. I therefore hasten to inform my readers, that I was not indebted, as they may suppose from the conclusion of my last letter, to the mediation of Lucy, for the sudden reconciliation effected between her mother and myself; but to certain considerations annexed to her communication that I had that morning made her the offer of my hand and fortune. My Aunt sagely reflected, that possibly her daughter might not attract the regard of a wealthier or better youth; and she was also willing to suffer her own inclinations to operate in the choice of a partner for life—a liberty withheld by some parents, as well as unreasonably claimed by some children. Matters moved smoothly forward, and

I was acknowledged as the unrivalled object of my Lucy's affections, and the welcomed son elect of my justly named already *maternal* Aunt.

Probably my readers may now desire a more intimate acquaintance with my intended partner for life, and be disposed to request of me a delineation of her character. They must be aware that their request is in a degree unreasonable; for where is the lover who can delineate the character of his mistress? If, however, it will be any gratification to learn the view I had taken, they may peruse it in a letter written to Miss W——, in reply to certain questions on the subject, which some of my readers may likewise wish to propose. Miss W——, wrote as follows:--

"That part of your letter, my dear friend, which mentioned your future prospects in the nearest and dearest of connexions, excited in each of us the most lively interest. Accept our united wishes for your happiness in this new relation. My father says you must favour him with more detail in this affair, he is surprised at your silence when so lately in his company, and your short sentences made him frown.

"We scarcely knew the effects of a frown before on his dear countenance; and when he came to the words, 'my Lucy from an infant has been universally allowed to be handsome even by the ladies, and now she is beautiful as an angel,' he exclaimed *pish*. In obedience to his commands, I instantly seized the pen, and now may father dictates for me—*Cœlebs*, a prudent wife is

from the *Lord*; may you possess this inestimable blessing. I will not doubt, but that in this momentous concern, which involves the domestic happiness of your future life, and may even obtain an influence on eternity itself, you have been frequently imploring light and benediction from your heavenly Father. I take it for granted also, that your fair Cousin does not inherit her mother's ignorance and bigotry on divine subjects, and that you are convinced the dawnings of piety are at least begun on her young mind. I should hope too, that a similarity of taste in all essential points subsists between you. These are *my hopes*: you are silent, and your silence excites my *fears*. Lose no time, but send me a character of your Lucy. It is unnecessary to talk of her beauty; every woman is beautiful enough in the eyes of that man who marries her for love. And the desire to have a wife an object of universal admiration is only an ebullition of vanity." My father pausing, my mother took up the theme, and now she directs my pen. "Cœlebs, I trust your intended partner has been well instructed in domestic duties, and that she knows enough of the regulation of a house to be aware of the necessity of prudent economy, even in the expenditure of your ample income. You will experience much uneasiness to be obliged to curtail your acts of benevolence, from defect of prudence in your wife. I hope too, that she is from retirement of temper, disposed to compliance with the apostolic precept to wives, to be "keepers at home." It would give me pleasure also to hear, that habits of subordination in early youth, had prepared her for a ready compliance to the next precept of the apostle—obedience to your will in all reasonable requirements." "Now, my dear mamma," I exclaimed, "I must stop my pen, you are really going too far in your expectations: Cœlebs will learn from you the art of governing his wife, an art surely in which none of his sex need instruction. My mother's reply reconciled me in some degree to my transcript of the offensive sentence. "If Cœlebs' wife be what

your father's hopes and mine have described, she will be the *governor* more than the *governed*: and while *she* maintains despotic sway, *he* will never wish a release from thraldrom.' Leaving you to solve this paradox, I hope, from happy experience, I add no more."

To the above epistle, I returned the following answer:

"How can I sufficiently thank my kind friends for their anxious wishes, and wise admonitions? They have also assigned me a welcome task, in the permission to write of my Lucy, the subject of my constant thought and tenderest interest. What will my pious friend say to my candid acknowledgment of defect in the preparatory duty at which he has hinted. Alas! I have here the accusations of conscience for leaving undone, what every argument of reason and religion proves I ought to have done. How prone are we weak and erring mortals to conclude ourselves competent to decide, where our wisdom would be to exclaim, "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life?"—But I will not pursue this sad retrospection of my error, trusting I shall be delivered from its deserved punishment. To your first enquiry respecting the religious disposition of my Lucy, I can pretty confidently speak. So far from inheriting her mother's bigotry, she abhors it. She listens closely to my explanations of Scripture doctrines—accompanies me constantly to church, and is ever willing to join me in the perusal of serious books. Her present situation is uncongenial to the growth of piety, she being constantly surrounded by vain companions; but doubtless when she becomes the wife of a clergyman, and is delivered from such association, the precious germ now contained within her heart, will spring forth, and blossom in abundance. I have no reason to doubt of a similarity of taste in riper years, when I recollect our agreement in childish amusements, and have besides the assurance of her warmest attachment, and desire to

promote my happiness. It is true, she does not at present shew the strong predilection for reading, which is my favourite employment; but this I am convinced arises from the ill-direction which has hitherto been given her by her mother in the choice of books. When she was at school, her mind was interested by the classic authors, and I anticipate the revival of her correct taste, and the peculiar delight I shall experience, while unfolding to her wondering ear the deeds of ancient days, the beauties of poesy, and the philosophy of mind and nature. We are both lovers of the country, and it is my intention to take the tour of England with my Lucy, previously to fixing on a spot for residence; therefore, in this arrangement we shall certainly be in unison. Thus far in reply to my worthy guardian.

I have only to assure my dear Mrs. W—, that my Aunt being one of the best economists of her day, has, I make no doubt, initiated her daughter into the art of prudent housewifery. I have witnessed many lessons imparted to her on this subject; and though I must confess, that I have also witnessed a few acts of insubordination on the part of Lucy towards her mother, yet she has appeared justified in my eyes, from a certain unreasonableness of temper attached to her mother's character, the effects of which have been severely felt by myself. And now I would fain convey to dear Miss W—, that I already understand and feel the effect of the paradoxical conclusion of her letter. I am even now in a thraldrom, from which I have no desire to escape, and I anticipate a day not very remote, when she also will exercise the same despotism over the happy proprietor of her best affections."

Having faithfully transcribed the above extracts from my correspondence, I laid aside my pen, to consider the plan best to pursue in the continuance of my narrative. Could I divine the taste of my readers, my task would

be comparatively easy; but I suspect they form so motley a group, that I am placed in a similar situation with the famed traveller of *ancient* times seated on the fashionable animal of the *modern*. This being probably the true state of the case, I know of no wiser method than to follow the example of the said traveller, and go on my way on the plan most agreeable to myself. I own myself in fearful expectation of being classed among a description of writers, whom I cannot in my judgment pronounce very respectable. While I am ambitious to gain the name of a *biographer*, I am aware I shall most probably receive the epithet of a *novelist*. On the first impulse of reflection on this dreaded consequence, I threw aside my pen, and snatching up my scattered pages, was hurrying them to the consuming flame of my chimney-corner, when my good genius, *philanthropy*, again arrested my attention. "Inconsistent mortal!" she exclaimed, "have you not enlisted yourself under my banner, and will you desert me from fear of a name? Those who are worthy of being my disciples, must sacrifice feeling to my dictates:" "and most cheerfully will I comply," returned my heart, "only teach me the happy art of avoiding the evil attached to the

name I hate, and it shall suffice." "I will take my station near you," replied my kind genius, "and dictate to your pen, or constrain you by my secret impulse to pause and consider, when your own inclinations would usurp the place of your judgment." "So shall it ever be between us," I rejoined, "nor will I burn a single sheet without your permission; nay, more, without your *order*, though every night the dreaded name, "Out-cry the boy at Philip's ear."

I opened my scrutoire, sorted out my love-letters, seated myself, leaning my head on my arm, to assist my recollection of the many love-dialogues which passed between my Lucy and myself during the vacations of two long years spent at College; when I felt the impulse from my good genius, and I paused to consider. First, I perused the said letters, and found neither in my own or Lucy's, a single sentence calculated for general benefit—nor did my recollection of dialogues prove more flattering. We talked like lovers, and as they generally talk in private, it may be persumed they are conscious that their conversations are not worth *public attention*. I replaced my papers, and exclaimed, away with my recollections!

My classical readers, thought I, will be de-

lighted to read the themes to which was awarded the prize of learning; they will be puzzled by the sophistry which puzzled me, and become worthy of my title—"Senior wrangler" of a College. Turning again to open my scrutoire, I was again urged to reflection, and why? The majority of readers should be instructed by the writer who aims at usefulness; and the majority would not peruse themes calculated to obtain the prize of learning. Happy too, the unsophistical mind, and woe to the writer who would rather perplex to shew his ingenuity, than edify by the dictates of his plain sense.

None but a writer knows a writer's cares. Once more I opened my scrutoire, and drew from thence my College memorandum-book. Surely, thought I, this will supply an interesting page; but no sooner had I run my eye over its contents, than every female reader appeared in battle-array against my Latin, my Greek, and my Hebrew sentences. Vainly I meditated a translation, for vanity flew to replace them, dreading the effect of such a measure on the general meaning and spirit of my juvenile performance.

In this dilemma of vainly searching out for some object to serve as an episode, and find-

ing none, I am compelled to resume the thread of my narrative. I therefore inform my readers, that after quitting College with no inconsiderable share of academic honours, I received a regular ordination, and was invested with the full orders of exterior qualification to enter on the functions of that sacred profession I had chosen. Thus circumstanced, my next solicitude was to complete my happiness by the poposed union with my young Cousin; but in alliances where riches on either side bear certain proportions, the wary friend proposes delay, till duly authorized by legal documents, the temple of hymen can be thrown open. We were forced to submit to this arbitrary appointment, and while lawyers were engaged in pecuniary business, Lucy, her mother, and myself, resolved on a travelling expedition for the purpose of amusement, and also with a view to fix on some eligible spot for our future residence. In consequence of this idea, every place we visited which charmed our eyes, excited a curiosity to know on what tenure the church living was held. On one of our excursions, we halted at a pleasant town, where we resolved to stay a few days; and on the first evening of our arrival, Lucy and myself walked from the

inn to enjoy the air and prospects by which we were surrounded. The latter was bounded by extensive downs, on one side spotted with sheep, or enriched by the glorious harvest; and on the other, by rich meadows, with cattle grazing, and a fertile vale so far remote from the "busy haunt of men," that the timid hare peeped forth within a few paces of our feet. On viewing the general appearance of the town, it presented few buildings worthy the appellation of houses; but numerous small tenements, which, scattered round in various directions, gave a novel and pleasing idea of cottage simplicity.

Turning my eye towards the sacred edifice, I remarked to my companion, that with such a church-living in my possession, I should like to remain amidst the beautiful scenery by which we were surrounded. She acquiesced in my opinion, and we resolved that on our return to the inn, we would question our Landlord on the subject of his church establishment.

Our host waited upon us at supper, and I began my enquiries, by asking who was the Incumbent of the parish church. "His name, Sir," replied my host, "is —— ——, and he is counted a great man, for he is canon of —— cathedral, and so is not here much of

his time. But, poor gentleman, he is fast bound for the other world. His Doctor gave him over last night, and they say one of his brother canons came to see him, but hurried back again without calling, fearing he should be too late to put in his petition for the living." "A friendly action truly," replied I; "his less interested parishioners, I presume, give him more attention. In what estimation is he held amongst them?" "Just like every body else in these parts," replied the Landlord. "Those who are of his party speak well of him." "And what do they say of his preaching?" said I. "He is counted to preach good election sermons," returned my host. "I heard one of them once, and, to be sure, it was very fine, but it stirred up a *fine rumpus*, for they fell to fighting about it at the Bear, and, as a Justice of the Peace, he was forced to commit several of his hearers to the county jail." "You surprise me," returned I; "prejudice against the truth must run very high indeed in this neighbourhood, as well as ignorance of its proper effect; yet your minister must deliver his message, and not keep out of sight any part of your Bibles." "That's true, Sir," resumed my host, "but I can't recollect any thing about *parliament*-

men in the Bible; though, indeed, to my shame, I must own I don't know every part of it." I smiled at my misconception of the term applied to the sermons in question; for, on further interrogations, I found that once in seven years at least, this apparently peaceful spot was the seat of civil war, and that even the Church was no sanctuary; since the family who retained the gift of the living, had, for several generations, represented the Borough in Parliament; and on every presentation, intimated their wish that certain political questions should be dicussed in the pulpit at elections, which should bear in favour of the opinions entertained by the generous patron of the parish-priest. "Such a contingency," I remarked, "must deter every honest man from seeking the living." "'Tis whispered about," returned my host, "that matters will go in a different way this time, for the young Knight is poor, and 'tis thought means to *sell* the living to the *highest bidder*, and let the Parliament take its chance."

When our Landlord quitted us, I intimated the sudden wish I entertained, of hastening after the canon on the same errand to the patron. Not possessing the scrupulosity on this subject of numbers of my clerical

brethren, I easily negociated with all due secrecy through the medium of a friend, the necessary arrangements which invested me with a proper title to hold this desired pastoral office.

Some of my readers may imagine I made further enquiries respecting the manners and general condition of the inhabitants, among whom I was anxious to take up my residence, and wonder at my temerity in venturing upon strange connexions, unsolicited, probably undesired. Their wonder will in some measure abate, when they consider my situation at this period of my life; especially, if they have passed through it themselves. Surely, some of my married readers can cast a complacent look at each other, and exclaim—"Yes, we recollect the time when, like Cœlebs and his Lucy, we disdained the thought of seeking any society but that of each other—when we forgot 'all times, all seasons, and their change'."

I suspect some of my fair readers will enquire whether Lucy was not solicitous to see the Parsonage-house? and I inform them, she was greatly pleased with its romantic aspect, its antique porch, and Gothic windows. She had also entered into close conversation with the Landlady of the inn; and when I communicate the subjects of these conversations,

their surprise at her ready compliance with my wishes will subside.

Man is frequently described by the moralist, as the creature of habit and circumstances; and it is a general truth, that from association the mind receives a tincture which governs action. So far as my readers have proceeded in my history, I conjecture they have discovered in me a confirmation of the above remark—my character was formed much by *circumstances*. Under a pious and judicious preceptor, they have seen my young mind stored with useful information, and a tolerable degree of consistency maintained between my conduct and imbibed principles. Under the influence of lax discipline and licentious associates, they have beheld my dereliction from the paths of virtue; and from a change of passing occurrences, and the expectation of a matrimonial alliance, they have beheld a happy change for the better in my morals and practices. In justice to myself, I am now authorized to inform them, I entered on the important office of a parish priest, with a considerable degree of that spirit which ought to characterize the honourable title. I was prepared to watch for souls as one who was to give an account—I had studied diligently the system

of divinity in which I had been educated—and was well convinced in my judgment, that the creeds, articles, and liturgy of my national church were, in every essential particular, conformable to the obvious sense of the Holy Scriptures. I therefore felt no scruples in the act of subscription at College, or any hesitation as to the doctrines I should deliver from my pulpit.

It is wisely ordained by our kind and heavenly Father, that our "strength to suffer, and our will to serve," is not only proportioned to the time of need, but that our peculiar views and feelings are adapted to the parts we have to sustain in the several stages of life. Were it not for this, how seldom should we see virtue, wisdom, and energy, pressing eagerly forward in early years to enter upon important occupations, and responsible offices. When experience has taught us diffidence, we wonder at our youthful temerity. Yet established in our rank of usefulness, we are grateful for the mist in which the difficulties of our undertakings were enveloped. Perhaps these reflections are peuliarly applicable to those who take upon themselves the ministerial office; since no situation involves such awful responsibilities, and few are attended by greater difficul-

ties and discouragements. The young clergyman possessed of tolerable knowledge—conscious of natural talents for the composition and delivery of his discourses; and, above all, self-satisfied as to the sincerity of his wishes and aims in the choice he has made of the sacred profession, comes boldly forward, fears no danger, and anticipates success in his attempts to enlighten and reform his fellow-immortals. Such being precisely my own feelings, none must expect to hear of my timid sensations, my anxious prayers, and careful preparations to appear before my audience. Yet, I hope, by this frank acknowledgement, that I shall not lessen the interest of any of my readers towards my expected appearance, the particulars of which I propose to enter upon in my next.

CHAP. IX.

THE first personage who usually attracts the notice of a parish priest on his first entrance into the important office, is the officiating Curate of his predecessor. This gentleman I summoned into my presence; but not with the intention of investigating his opinions or abilities for the execution of his trust, so much as to acquaint him with my own resolutions, as to the part I meant to sustain in church-duty. I informed him, that I intended to be the sole occupier of my pulpit and reading-desk, and wished to avail myself of his assistance in the offices of burials and baptisms only. He informed me this arrangement would meet his convenience better than my predecessor's had done: for, his own church duty was considerable, having to preach three times every Sabbath, read prayers twice a week in two churches, baptizing and burying nearly the whole race in both parishes; for which he received the yearly stipend of eighty

pounds. One fourth of this sum had been presented him by the late Incumbent of my living. The reader will be left to estimate what proportion the labours of the Curate bore to their reward:

Having happily succeeded in pleasing that person, who I cannot help thinking possesses a claim on the attention and commiseration of every parish Rector, my next interest was directed towards two inferior individuals, who yet possess importance sufficient to aid the parish priest by their dutiful assiduity, or torment him by the reverse in their general conduct. These personages were the clerk and female sexton of my church. The former I found united the name to the office—he was Mr. Clerk, the clerk. In person and dress, my new servant cut as grotesque a figure as those of his fraternity, who, by a little heightening in colouring, are deemed proper exhibitions of the profession in a print-shop; and I congratulated myself in reflecting, that my station in public did not admit of the full view to which my congregation was destined.

After the first compliments had passed between us, I dashed at once into what I believe most persons in my situation would deem an interesting conversation, because its drift was

to learn from this, as I conceived, enlightened companion, the state of my parishioners' minds respecting church attendance.

Requesting Mr. Clerk to unlock the massy door of the sacred edifice, in order to my taking a more accurate survey of its interior than I had yet done, I followed him into the solemn aisle, which echoed each step; whilst, with a chilly air, it seemed to repulse, rather than welcome its proper visitors. "Mr. Clerk," said I, shrugging up my shoulders, "I trust these walls are as well lined by the living, as I see they are by the dead; and I hope, too, the air will be thoroughly rarefied by their breaths every Sunday before my entrance amongst them." Mr. Clerk shrugged his shoulders in return, and winked his left eye, but made no answer. Now, had he done so, it would not have spoken more eloquently—"Sir, you will have but a poor thin congregation." "Surely," returned I, "the practice of absenting themselves from church, bespeaks some flagrant error, either in your neighbours, or your late pastor: Can you inform me which party is most to be blamed?" "Why, Sir," replied Mr. Clerk, "if you will have the rights of it, I must say it was as much the Parson's fault as the people's. When our Rector was *at home*, as one may say;

(for, to my thinking, every Rectory-house should be the Rector's home) we *did* muster about fifty or sixty, just enough to raise a stave or so; but, when he was gone, there was no saying when church would begin: for sometimes the Curate was detained at one of his other churches; or, perhaps, got so wet in riding his four miles on a rainy day, that he was forced to make us wait whilst he dried himself: and thanks to me he had any fire in the vestry to dry himself by; for our Madam, the Sexton, is after the loaves and fishes; and our poor Parson could not find many for his own table, so gave her never a sixpence to get any for hers; and, for all she cared, he might have gone to his grave by a damp surplice every Sunday of his life. But as I was saying, not knowing when church would begin, folks did not like to come and sit mayhap for an hour or two: and of an afternoon, it was settled between the Rector and Curate, there should be no church at all, except, indeed, the year before I came here, which was last Lammas-day sixteen years. The clerk before me was one of the Methodist people, and had used to serve as clerk in their meeting-place every Sunday afternoon. So to plague them by taking away their clerk,

the church was opened for prayers till he died, and I came in his room."

"And those Methodist people," said I, "are still here I presume, and have found another clerk." "No, Sir," returned my informant, "I have good news for you here, for I think I may safely say there is not a Methodist now within seven miles of us. What with the spite of our church Parsons, the noise and *bother* of the elections, and the preachings at a meeting set up against them, right opposite to their maxims, they found no comfort nor harvest here, so off they set." "And left their other sectarian neighbours in full possession of the field, I suppose," returned I. "Their reign wasn't long neither," resumed Mr. C. "for the poor folks said they could make out nothing of what they preached about; and the rich ones were affronted, because they said all the church people were little better than Papists, and that the prayer-book taught idolatry." "Well," said I, "may the blessing of God rest on my ministry, for I am come to impart comfort, and to reap a harvest among you to comfort myself also." "There's no blessing of God," replied Mr. C. "will reconcile the farmers to a *Parson's harvest;* and so I'm afraid you'll find, Sir."

"You don't take my meaning," returned I, "a Parson's harvest is altogether a spiritual one. He seeks *you*, not *yours*."

As I spoke the last sentence, I looked earnestly in the face of my clerk, in order to discover whether his heart was warmed by the sentiment; for, notwithstanding the human heart is deceitful above all things, it frequently imparts to the countenance a true and genuine impression of its feeling. The silence and apathy of look with which my observation was received, conveyed pretty clearly to my apprehension, how far my clerk was likely to appreciate the merits of a faithful minister.

After remarking curiously on other objects around us, Mr. Clerk adverted to what he termed the shameful manner in which the pews were kept by Madam Sexton as he called her, pointing to a quantity of dust which was lodged on the tops of many of them. I remarked it was Friday, and that perhaps she would clear it away on the morrow: but Mr Clerk said, if it were cleared away at all, it would be by the elbows or handkerchiefs of the pew-owners; and that one might always judge of their attendance, by the thickness or thinness of the dust lodged on their pew's railing. Why my worthy clerk was so anxious

to initiate me in this secret of church history, was explained by the conclusion of his discourse; for he added, "Yet, would you believe it, Sir, notwithstanding this woman's dirt, and insolence to our worthy Curate, she was given the *bell*, which our late Rector said ought to be *mine;* and now *you*, Sir, are come to the living, I dare say you will see *justice done*." I smiled at this attempt to bribe justice into the service of private interest; while I told Mr. Clerk, he reminded me of the complaints made by Mephibosheth to King David, just as he was settled in his kingdom; and that, probably, a similar answer might be due in the case—let this woman and thou *divide the bell*. Mr. Clerk reddened at my answer, while he said, "No, I will have all the bell, or none of it."

Deeming it most prudent to decline a further discussion of the subject, I intimated my wish to quit the church; and, parting from Mr. Clerk, I returned to my house, where I found waiting to introduce herself, the identical "Madam Sexton." The general air of her deportment partook more of the respectful, and her person less of peculiarity than Mr. Clerk's. She congratulated me with many courtesies on my arrival, and assured me of

her wishes to please me in the performance of her duty, to which I made suitable answers. Wishing to ascertain the real character and disposition of this servant of my church, I detained her in conversation, and chose a subject which I knew would prove the most interesting in the question. "And pray, Mrs. B. how long have you been in your present office, and what is your family?" She replied, "Sir, I am a widow, and was left with three daughters, and four sons, the eldest only twelve years old, and the youngest, one, when my husband died; who was as honest a carpenter as ever came into this parish, or any other, as I may say; but, as he paid every body their own, he left nothing for me, and so I was thrown on the charity of my neighbours; and, by their helping a little, and working very hard, I made shift to keep things together, till my children grew up, and were able to provide for themselves." "Providence has done wonders for *you*, indeed," returned I. "Providence, Sir," repeated Mrs. B. "I'm sure I have worked hard for most that I got; for, as I said before, my neighbours helped but a little. To be sure, the 'Squire's lady took my eldest girl, and Farmer Grimes the boy, and the rest were put into the chari-

ty schools, and finely they came on in their learning; for the boys soon helped to teach the reading to the other boys, and the girls worked for the ladies. If I had been given their earnings, it would have helped me a bit. But I don't complain, 'tis all gone by now. When the sexton-woman of the church died, I thought I had a right to the place, and the parish thought so too, though the Rector and Mr. Clerk wanted to keep me out; but I don't say much about that, I don't bear malice to the dead." Nor the living either, I hope, Mrs. B." returned I. "No, indeed, Sir," replied Mrs. B. "but you, Sir, seem so kind and friendly in your talk, that I would wish just to say a word or two about Mr. Clerk, lest he should use you as he did our last Rector; and I'm sure I should be very sorry to see *you* cheated: I did not care what was done to him, he was so proud and stingy. Mr. Clerk and he used to give one another the *lie*, (saving your presence) whenever they read the one hundred and thirty-first psalm, for a prouder looking man than our late Rector was never seen; nor a greater busy body in other folk's matters, than Mr. Clerk. Then Sir," continued my loquacious informant, "our late Rector was too proud

to go about collecting his Easter-dues himself, so they came to him through Mr. Clerk's hands; and when a good rich couple were married, and paid down a handsome fee on the vestry-table for the clergyman, he would ask them whether they meant it for the Rector or Curate. Almost every body would answer for the Curate, because some how or other, every body likes a poor parson better than a rich one, and so the Curate got the fee, which he divided with Mr. Clerk, *some* folks say, *I* say nothing."

Now, it sometimes happens, that speakers and hearers are not exactly agreed in opinion, and so in the present case; for I thought the sexton-woman had said much, and more than it became the dignity of my character to hear. I therefore assumed a repulsive air, and observed, that tittle tattle was unbecoming to all, and evil reports generally rose from false representations. My sexton courtesied again, and wisely took my hint for hastening her retreat; but before she reached my door, she courtesied once more, and begged forgiveness for her boldness in asking, whether I meant to hold a lecture on Sunday evenings. I answered in the affirmative: on which she cast upon me such a look of complacency, that I

blamed my too ready supposition to her disadvantage; at any rate thought I, the woman wishes for sermons, regardless of the increase of trouble in her church attendance. "Have you ever had lectures here," said I. Encouraged by my re-assumption of discourse, Mrs. B. returned a few paces, while she replied, "Ah! no, Sir, but a great many people regretted there was no evening church, especially the churchwarden and I; for it grieved us to the heart to see the folks go to the Methodist meeting when there was one here: now, indeed, it does not signify so much, for there is no Methodist meeting for them to go to, so they only saunter about the fields, or sit at the public houses." My conjecture that you love sermons, thought I again, is ill founded, I must fathom this mystery. "As you say the Churchwarden wishes for evening lectures," said I, "I presume he will constantly attend." "I can't say, Sir," returned Mrs. B, "how that may be, for he generally thinks it right to go to ——— church in the next village, because the Churchwardens there buy all their candles for the lecture of him; and indeed, I must say, our Churchwarden serves them well, and that he is the best friend I ever had in the world: many a candle-end has he given me."

The mystery both of my Churchwarden's anxiety for evening lectures, and the complacent air of my Sexton woman, being now fully unravelled to my comprehension, I dismissed her from my presence, and now call my readers' attention to my first appearance and conduct before my parishioners.

Agreeably to custom, I proposed to read in the ears of my flock the articles of the church to which I had subscribed. I repeat it was my intention to read these articles in *their ears;* for I had observed, it was too much the practice with my brethren in the ministry on such occasions, to read them only in the *eyes* of their congregations. To this reading, I intended to add one of our shortest homilies instead of a sermon, as I deemed the articles and homilies peculiarly appropriate to each other. I therefore requested my clerk to place the book of homilies in the reading-desk, as I did not intend to ascend the pulpit till the evening to deliver a sermon. To my great surprise, Mr. Clerk informed me, there was no such book in the vestry, nor ever had been in his time. He added, that he recollected an old man once asking the former Rector if he would have the goodness to let him look into the homily book,

and his reply that the book was now quite out of vogue, and was not to be found even in cathedrals. "And what said the old man?" questioned I eagerly. "He only shook his head," returned Mr. C. and said, "aye, every dog has his day, mayhap *my* great grand-children may live to see the day when the Bible too shall be turned out of the cathedrals." "And what said the canon to that?" again questioned I. "He called him an impertinent fellow," replied Mr. Clerk, "and walked away." Now, whether the old man deserved the epithet or not by uttering an intended sarcasm, under an apparent simplicity of idea, I cannot determine, but it rejoices my heart to know, that he was no *prophet;* and that the book pronounced to be out of vogue, has again found its way to the libraries of the rich, as well as the poor.

Curiosity had called together a more numerous flock than I expected to see from the representation of Mr. Clerk. They seemed to consist chiefly of farmers with their families. I must confess, indeed, their appearance did not carry me back to Arcadian ages in imagination, but it certainly approached nearer than most country congregations in the present times. My audience were rustic in

demeanour, plain in attire, and healthful in countenance. I had the satisfaction to see a moderate degree of attention to the prayers and lessons which I read; and on my informing them that I was about to set before them the principles of their church, they evinced in their general deportment still more attention. After I had finished reading the articles, I commented very briefly on those which bore particular reference to the doctrines of our holy religion, and affectionately urged them to a due examination of their truth and importance; and closed my exhortation with announcing my intention of addressing them the same evening, and so to continue, provided they gave me their regular attendance.

In the evening, I had the pleasure of seeing again the same faces, with the addition of a few more, and the 'Squire with his wife and daughters." I shall not intrude on the notice of my readers the subject of my first discourse, for I earnestly wish their attention directed towards more finished specimens. It was what might be expected from a young divine much in earnest, but wholly inexperienced in the work of instruction. When I had reached nearly the middle of my sermon, I observed a few languid looks among my hearers;

and casting my eye towards the pew occupied by the 'Squire, I beheld he was actually fallen into a dose. Not possessing the meek disposition of a certain pious priest, who, on a similar discovery fell back in his pulpit, and burst into a flood of tears, I instantaneously resolved on a reverse of conduct. I struck my hand violently on my old velvet cushion, in order to rouse the sleeping 'Squire, when out flew, not as in modern times, learned manuscripts to amuse the curious, and furnish food for the controvertist, but a volley of dust, to annoy my eyes, and meet their brother particles on the neighbouring pews. My object was attained; the 'Squire started, every face was directed upwards, and leaning over my cushion at the moment, I encountered also the eyes of my clerk, full of astonishment at my sounding eloquence, and alike inconvenienced by the falling atoms.

When I had retired to the vestry room, I requested my pew-opener to clear away the offensive contents of my cushion; and happily for my peace, as well as that of the public, this could more easily be effected than the clearance of the controversial contents of modern cushions. I accepted the humble confession of my pew-opener, namely, her igno-

rance of such offensive contents; while my clerk observed, the circumstance reminded him of the good old fable of the farmer reaping his own fields. He said, he questioned whether there were any church-cushions so free from dirt and rubbish as the Methodists' cushions, who took care to *bang* them well themselves every Sunday. Then recollecting he was showing off his wit at the expence of his good manners, he made a profound bow, and added, he did not mean though to call me a Methodist.

I retired from Church in a mood of complacency, for I had acquitted myself in all respects to my own satisfaction; at the same time, I was convinced of the propriety, if not the necessity, of following the seed I had endeavoured to sow in the hearts of my hearers by my prayers. For this purpose I was proceeding to my study, when I was met by my Aunt and Lucy, who engaged my company in a walk round the garden, and my attention to the idle chit-chat their ready eloquence supplied. My situation was peculiar, and some excuse is due to my compliance. They had accompanied me to my Parsonage-house for the purpose of accommodating its furniture, and other arrangements of a domestic

nature, to the taste of its expected mistress, who only waited the conclusion of law settlements, to take possession both of the master and the mansion. I was therefore engaged by the rules of politeness and hospitality to a ready compliance with all their wishes. As I strolled by their side, and trifled away the Sabbath evening hour, a thought shot across my mind—Is this plan to last? No, returned sanguine hope; thy Lucy will learn to improve her Sabbath hours, animated by thy example, and removed from the eye and discipline of a mother, averse to the very semblance of piety.

With this hope, I closed my peaceful eyes, and awoke in health and spirits to encounter a walk round my parish, in order to obtain some knowledge of its inhabitants. And in this walk, I hope all my present readers will accompany me.

CHAP. X.

THE first object of attraction in a country village is usually the 'Squire, and feeling this attraction myself, I bent my footsteps towards his dwelling. I was civilly received by the ladies of the family, who informed me the 'Squire was not yet returned from hunting, but expected every moment. I essayed to enter on familiar chat with these ladies, but there was evidently an air of constraint over the whole of their deportment, which awed me into silence; and I was about to take my leave, when the expected master of the house arrived. The taciturnity which embarrassed me in the ladies, was now exchanged for a loquacity which offended me in the gentleman. After the first salutation, the 'Squire opened upon the adventures of the morning, in which he betrayed a mind devoted to the subject, which of all others, was the least congenial to my taste or information. He ended his narration by expressing his hopes that I would

join the next party, and not be too proud for a fox-hunt, as my predecessor had been. I frankly avowed my aversion to the sport. "Well then," rejoined the 'Squire, "you'll imitate the old parson, and come in at the feast. He never failed us here; nor is there a Parson in England averse to a good dinner—hey!"

To this courteous invitation I bowed with an air by which I designed to express my resolution to decline it, and rose to make my desired exit. As I walked from the door, I whispered to myself, 'Farewell, 'Squire: one half hour's conversation with you sufficeth me.' The sensation was natural, and the determination in character, with one who had to learn the apostolic lesson—"Be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

I next looked into a farm-yard, where the inhabitants were feasting on the provisions appropriated to their various tastes. As I leaned over the gate, I saw female heads peep from the windows, and suddenly disappear to make way for more heads, till, as I imagined, the curiosity of all was gratified, and I expected a general invitation to enter. Disappointed in my expectation, and fearful of in-

trusion, I was withdrawing from the gate, when the jolly master of the mansion suddenly turned a corner, and presented himself before me with the salutation—"Ah, your Reverence! what, looking after the stock? There is not much that's titheable here." "Farmer," replied I, "you were never more mistaken in your life; the idea of tithes never entered my head as I was amusing myself with watching the movements of your little interesting family." The farmer now put out his rough hand, and with the other uncovered his head, while I shook it; at the same instant he kicked open the gate, and hallooed—"Mistress, come to the door." The order was instantly obeyed; and his Dame, wiping her red arms from the curds of her cheese-tub, desired me to walk in. "Draw a can of ale," said the farmer, "his Reverence will take a bit and drop," opening a cupboard-door, and taking out a tongue as he spoke. I would not mortify hospitable feelings, and acquiesced. "Sit down, Molly," said her husband, "his Reverence isn't like his last Reverence, he don't mean to take tithes." "Bless your heart, Sir," said Molly, "you be then one of a thousand." Now, though it was gratifying to stand well in the opinion of my company, I

yet could not bear to practise deception; and being resolved to do as my brethren did in the affair of tythes, I addressed to the farmer the question, "When, my friend, you took this farm of your landlord, what agreement did you make respecting the products of it?" "Ah, your Reverence don't understand letting farms I see," returned the farmer; "why to be sure, I expected to have all the produce of it. He took care to make me pay for it in rent, I promise you." "And do you never make him a present?" rejoined I. "I would see him at the———." The farmer recollected himself in time to let his intended sentence remain unfinished, while he poured out a glass to the health of all good landlords who never raised their rents. "Now," said I, "you shall know the reason for my question—You must know, I have purchased this living, as you have your farm, by giving the utmost value for it; and I do therefore expect to possess all the profits. But in regard to making presents, I am not of your mind, for I intend as I see occasion, to help all my parishioners; and should you be unfortunate, you shall share of the tythes, which in the days of your prosperity I shall take of you. By this conduct, I not only do an act of justice to myself, but

also to my successors in the living, to whom the emoluments of it may be of greater consideration, and who would suffer in reputation from my act of false benevolence, in foregoing my rights."

Contrary to my expectation, my hearers seemed to feel the force of my application, which gave me courage to urge on their attention the importance of my office. "If," said I, "my ministry is blessed to the salvation of your souls, when we meet in heaven, it will not be a subject of regret that you ministered to me of your worldly substance: our Lord himself sent forth his apostles to become labourers worthy of their hire." "I sha'nt mind," rejoined the farmer, "paying something to a parson who speaks out, for your Reverence must know I am a little dunny, and when parsons *mumble, mumble*, as ours have done for these twenty years, it can't be said they are worthy of their hire." "Aye!" added his dame, "'twere all the world like a mouse in a cheese with them." Then as though reminded by the simile of her proper business, she disappeared, and I saw her no more. I endeavoured to engage the farmer in serious discourse, but he was evidently averse, and I thought it prudent to cease from

urging it for the present. I asked him after his brethren in the line of his business, and whether he stood well with them. "That," said he, "depends upon how we agree in the market; we *be* all alike, hearty fellows at home, and good sparks abroad. When you see me, you see all the farmers round here, for we have got no gentlemen farmers in these parts; as I said before we *be* all alike."

Having seen as much as I wished of the specimen at present, I took leave, and bent my steps towards the main street of the town, bowing courteously to many rustic marks of respect, and anticipating the pleasing era when *affection* would be mingled with the *respect* of my parishioners. Memory retraced the walks I had so frequently taken with my worthy tutor—How did he greet, and how was he greeted by his parishioners; every eye sparkled, and every countenance was lighted up as he approached. Then, heart met heart, and yielded some foretaste of the "joy and crown of rejoicing," in reserve for the faithful minister in the presence of his Divine Master at his coming.

I was roused from these agreeable musings by the harsh note of a parrot suspended from a window, in which was seated an elderly

lady, who, smiling, and taking off her spectacles, I thought invited me to call; on my showing an inclination also, she was at her door in an instant, and welcomed me in a style which excited some hope that my musings were about to be realized. But how was I disappointed when she announced the reason for her ready admission—for, pointing to a newspaper on her table, "Sir," said she, "you'll excuse my freedom, but as you are so lately from London, perhaps you know whether his Majesty does really intend to dissolve the parliament, as the papers say he does." I replied, "that not being in the secrets of the Cabinet, I really could not give the information she wished." "Our late Rector," rejoined the lady, "always knew the first tidings of an election, and was very kind in telling me." "Have you a friend or relation, Madam," returned I, "who intends to offer himself a candidate?" "No," returned the lady, "but I am a considerable landholder in these parts, and influence my tenants in the member I wish to succeed."

I was about to lament to the lady the prevalence of the feudal system in this country, and to advise a relinquishment of her rights of vassalage, when a loud rap at her door

announced a visitor, and a lady entered, who at the first glance excited risible emotions. Now, I hold it not only silly, but impious, to ridicule deformity of person, or peculiarity of station. The human form, be it what it may, is the workmanship of God; and, for wise reasons, to some individuals are allotted beauty, and to others deformity. The relative stations in society are the dispensations of Providence; and to blame station, is to blame the God of order. When I announce the lady who entered to be an antiquated spinster, of a disagreeable person, I declare these were not the circumstances which raised my risible emotions. They were simply occasioned by the extraneous disadvantages she imposed upon herself in her dress and deportment. With a girlish air, conformable to the gay colours in which she had adorned herself, she announced the purport of her morning call, which was to form a party for the next evening. Then turning to me with a familiar manner, mistaken for the ease of good-breeding, she signified her intention of paying her respects of my intended good lady, and expressed her hope that she would be very friendly in the neighbourhood. I answered, it must certainly be the

wish of every pastor to enjoy the friendship of his parishioners, and that I hoped many parties would meet at church, to unite with me in the most delightful of all employments.

The ladies now began to expatiate on the disadvantages of country churches, arising from dampness and the bad supply of ministers. I modestly hinted, that I hoped the latter evil would be remedied; and the former certainly might be meliorated by a more numerous attendance of the parishioners. The mistress of the house then regretted her infirmity in not being able to walk so far as the church; and the maiden-lady frankly avowed herself a fastidious hearer, having been spoilt for any other than the first-rate preachers she had been used to for some years, when she resided in London. I hinted my surprise that she withdrew from a place where she was so highly favoured, as she was so difficult in her choice. "Why, Sir," replied she, "you may think it strange when I say, I found London a dull residence. I lived with my father in the city, and really we knew no more of our neighbours than as though we had been an hundred miles apart. Now, here is the advantage of a country-town, that one knows every body, and may

visit every body, if one likes: by the way, Ma'am, (continued she, turning to the lady of the house) since I saw you last, I have heard that our new neighbour is really the widow of a clergyman, and not parted from her husband, as was at first reported; but why she lives so retired, and immures her daughter in such a manner, I cannot imagine. They say too, that she has only an annuity for life; and if so, how imprudent of her not to put the girl out to some business. I have no notion of bringing young folks up to nothing but reading and meditation—I believe the poor thing never stirs out but of a Sunday; and so far 'tis well, her mother takes it into her head to go two miles to church to hear the Methodist-preacher." "You are, Madam," said I, "either very liberal in using the word *church* in an enlarged sense, or I presume incorrect in the title of the edifice where the Methodist preaches—I presume the lady attends a *meeting-house*." "No, Sir," she replied, "Mr. —— is a Church-methodist, and you'll find him very troublesome, for he interferes not a little in other people's parishes. It was but the other day he came to pray with a set of riffraff, dirty wretches, you would not have come nigh." "Nay, Madam,"

said I, "if this be the case, I shall have reason to thank him for taking on himself such a disagreeable office; and, truly, a Church-methodist must be a very extraordinary character; I shall take an early opportunity of paying my respects to him."

Both the ladies looked surprized at my observation; but they were met to talk of their neighbours, not of church affairs; and the spinster lady resumed her task. "The same day," said she, "that revealed to me the truth of Mrs. B.'s widowhood, disclosed a secret of our neighbour F. We must not visit her again—I never was so surprized in my life: do you know she never was married to Mr. F.; 'tis all come out in Doctors' Commons, for my nephew saw the will." "Astonishing!" returned the lady of the house, "but I think we may as well not know it: we shall lose much pleasure by withdrawing from her acquaintance."—The more scrupulous lady drew herself up, as she said, "You may do as you please, Ma'am, I am decided on proprieties on these occasions; and I have no doubt but you, Sir, (turning to me) are of my opinion." I replied, "it might be a question how far she could with propriety continue the acquaintance, after the

lady was so lessened in her esteem, as I conceived she would sacrifice sincerity, either in word or thought, in an intercourse; but there could be no question on the duty which devolved on her of secrecy in so delicate a matter, which most probably would not reach the ears of others, who had not prying nephews. The Christian rule was the only one in this case, 'Do as you would be done by'." The lady coloured at my observation, but whether it was the blush of conviction, or displeasure, I could not ascertain; and probably thinking she had sat long enough in the company of a grave Divine, she sprang from her seat with the same vivacity with which she had taken possession of it, and made her exit; the parrot vociferating as she passed the door—"Poll's ashamed! Poll's ashamed!"

My curiosity and interest being excited by the brief sketch the lady had given of the characters of the widow and the daughter, I resumed the theme, and was further informed, that the statement of their never leaving home but for the purpose of going to church, was not correct; for they visited much among the poor, and only declined being seen at the parties of their opulent neighbours. This was ascribed to their avowed dislike of

cards, and to the peculiarity of their religious opinions.

After repeating my wishes of seeing this agreeable lady at church, who had so courteously invited me into her parlour, I once more entered the street; and passing an obscure lane, in which were a few cottages, I saw a young lady come out of one of them, with a small pitcher in her hand. She cast a modest and timid glance on me, which implied a knowledge of my person, and respect for my office; while I returned a smile, designed to express the benevolent sensation I experienced, and begged permission to walk by her side, if she was not particularly engaged. "I am only returning home, Sir," said she, "you do me honour, and my mother, I am sure, will be happy to see you." She glanced her eye on her pitcher, while she drew out her pocket-handkerchief to cover it. "You remind me," said I, "of the philosopher, who being met carrying a fish, declared he was only carrying it for *himself*, not the public, and therefore none should be offended. I will not offer to bear your burden, it becomes you so well; for I guess the occasion of it, and it reflects more honour on you than that of the philosopher's." My fair companion smiled,

and observed, "She was not often so burthened, but the illness of her servant obliged her to do what some might esteem an ostentatious duty, though I had kindly given it a better construction." I told her, that although I was unacquainted with her person, I had heard her character; for I felt assured in my mind, this could be no other than the daughter of the widow lady. "You surprise me, Sir," said she, "for my mother and I have been only a short time in this neighbourhood, and have not formed a single acquaintance." "A city set on a hill," returned I, "cannot be hid, and such are all Christians who are active in all works of benevolence."

By this time we reached the neat cottage which my amiable companion pronounced to be her home: the door was opened by her mother in her widowed dress, the interest of which was heightened by the soft melancholy diffused over her fair complexion. She also, as well as her daughter, seemed to recognize my person and office, and with a genteel affability presented me her hand. I followed her into her parlour, apologizing for my intrusion; but she intreated me to use no apology for what she should ever deem the highest gratifi-

cation; a visit from her Pastor was an honour she had anticipated. There is one irresistible charm in a politeness which seems the rusult of sincerity; perhaps, in such cases, it may be more properly termed Christian courtesy: for, alas! the innocent word politeness is become prostitute, and a disgrace to society. The young lady knew how to sacrifice politeness to domestic tenderness; for, on her mother's acquainting her that Ann had been asking for her, and was uneasy at her absence, she instantly took leave of me, though as I would fain have believed by her look and manner, inclination would have urged a continuance in my company.

"What a treasure, Madam," said I, "are you in possession of," as her daugeter closed the parlour door. The tears started in her eyes, as she replied, "Yes, Sir, the hand was *graciously* severe when it took only half my worldly treasure:" then, as desirous of turning from a subject which excited ideas too tender, she began a detail of the afflictions of her poor neighbours, and other general topics of conversation, in which she discovered much good sense and observation.

I took my leave, in the hope that I had found one acquaintance likely to prove valu-

able to my Lucy: and now I expect my female readers, at least, are impatient for the arrival of a wedding day, which may not, like that of common novel writers, close my narrative. I assure them, I consider this as a radical defect in my brethren of the novel tribe. They take their leave of their heroes and heroines, just as their characters assume an importance in society, and might impart the most useful instruction. But, say my novel-reading friends, are we not to be favoured with a single LOVE dialogue, till the knot is tied, which certain invidious declaimers against the state aver annihilates the name. Being desirous of gratifying all laudable curiosity, I will comply with the supposed wishes of my readers; and in my next communicate the substance of a dialogue which passed between my fair Cousin and myself, one week previously to the intended celebration of our nuptials.

CHAP. XI.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening, and my fair Cousin consented to a ramble over an adjacent hill, to watch the setting sun, and gaze on the landscape reflecting the radiance of his declining beams. I fancied her less cheerful than usual, and somewhat indifferent to my kind endeavours to please her: something whispered the thought—Lucy *may* be capricious, and I became in my turn silent and reserved. In this mood we paced our way back to the Parsonage. We found my Aunt indisposed with a head-ache, and retired to her chamber; consequently, a tete-a-tete for the remainder of the evening was unavoidable. Lucy began, and relieved in some degree my suspicions of caprice, by revealing her sentiment on the season of the year. She remarked, "this is not my favourite month; the trees with their falling leaves, remind me of the approach of winter. There is already a chilliness in the air, and the evening hours

are neither sufficiently long to admit of employment, nor short enough to indulge in listless idleness.

Cœlebs.—There is some justness in your observation, and we will wisely endeavour to meliorate the evils of the season. We will order a cheerful faggot for our hearth; and see, the moon is preparing herself to front our window, when she emerges from yonder grove. We will not be so unpoetical as to close our shutters against her beams. Suppose we repeat, in reality, the "story of her birth." The study of Astronomy is highly sublime and interesting. I am not so well versed in it as I could wish; we will study it together at our leisure hours.

Lucy.—I don't think I shall like it. Indeed, to say the truth, I am not fond of any study.

Cœlebs.—Your dislike of study arises from the want of a habit of attention. My Lucy will not easily persuade me she has not a mind desirous of information. You shrink from the labour of thought, but this labour will lessen as you advance in knowledge. To let you into one of our school secrets, be it known to you, we avail ourselves of the thoughts of others, in our researches into science. To apply this

to the one in question: you and I are not obliged to enter upon calculations, and measure the heavenly bodies; we have only simply to apply rules marked out for us, and delight ourselves with the effects they will discover.

Lucy.—I can see no use in these abstruse studies.

Cœlebs.—Nay, now you have started an objection which would puzzle some scholars to answer, who are not conversant in the practical utility of knowledge: but a pious Divine can answer your objection:—

> " An undevout astronomer is mad:
> " True, all things speak a God; but in the small,
> " Men trace not him; in great he seizes man,
> " Seizes, and elevates, and wraps, and fills
> " With new enquiries, 'mid associates new."

Amidst so many impediments to a devotional spirit from within us, and without us, it is wise to choose a study calculated to encourage it. But my Lucy is silent; she is not yet reconciled to the philosophical name I would give her; she is not yet my *Urània.* Come, then, *domestic* muse, let us sing of thee. The hurry of engagements has banished too far our home born pleasures. Now we will enjoy the luxury of planning our future occupations.

Begin the theme for me, my dearest love, and I will fill up the outline.

Lucy.—My Cœlebs cannot forget his scholarship; you are so accustomed to rules, that you expect *system* wherever you turn. Now we females detest such uniformity of conduct. My actions must be regulated by my feelings—one day I shall like to walk, another day to visit, another to ride, and another to sit and hear a few of your grave remarks, and——

Cœlebs.—Help me to compose my sermons.

Lucy.—No, no; I hate sermons.

Cœlebs.—Oh fie; a Parson's wife hate sermons! Retract your words, or I shall frown on you for the first time in my life.

Lucy.—Well then, I hate all sermons except *yours*.

Cœlebs.—Then I have to hope the love of them will, in time, remove your hatred to others.—You speak of visiting; I am far from wishing you to shut yourself out of society, and I assure you this consideration is much on my mind; for, to speak plainly, from the little observation I have yet made on this neighbourhood, I am apprehensive I have brought you into a situation not favourable to social intercourse. The people here do

not seem to me fit companions for you; I blame myself for not investigating this matter before we came.

Lucy.—I thank you for your concern, but I think there is little ground for it. You know my disposition is not a proud one: I can take the world as I find it, and be amused with the variety it presents. Besides, our inferiors, in any natural or acquired advantage, may be expected to pay us deference, and conform themselves to our tastes.

Cœlebs.—I see you will help me in the composition of my sermons, though against your will. What a comment is your short sentence upon the text I have chosen for my next discourse—" The heart is deceitful above all things." Yes, even my Lucy can boast of her freedom from pride in one case, yet avow it in another. You will be gratified by the deference paid you; you will never probably be able to conquer this sensation entirely, which certainly has pride for its foundation; but you may turn it to some advantage, by aiming at the excellency worthy of deference. You will soon fill a very important station as the wife of a parish priest, and——

Lucy.—Nay, who talks proudly now?

Cœlebs.—I am only magnifying my *office.*

You must be my helper in the proper discharge of its duties. All eyes are upon us, and those who may not understand our instructions, will perfectly well judge our conduct. While I attend chiefly to the souls of my flock, it will become you to watch over their domestic habits: to discourage in the higher classes what is vain, and recommend in the lower industry and sobriety. I am shocked at the ignorance I this morning discovered; it was in unison with the apathy I witnessed on my first public address; but we will soon change the face of matters. The glorious gospel will dispel the clouds of ignorance, and impart *feeling* to all under its sound! The truths I shall deliver, will excite either love or hatred, and the examples we shall set them, will operate in the same manner.

Lucy.—I have no ambition to be an object of hatred, which I certainly shall if I assume the gait of a censor in the neighbourhood.

Cœlebs.—I pay no ill compliment to your sex, when I say you are formed for *reproof*. Call to your aid all those winning graces of manner you possess; add thereto a sound discriminating judgment, and you will be qualified for the work of Christian censorship. When I speak of the hatred we may incur, I

mean only the effects our principles may produce; and when those principles are better understood, and more generally embraced by our neighbours, their hatred will be exchanged for love. Thus, while we are not "overcome of evil, we shall overcome evil with good." A thought struck me as I viewed the numbers of ragged children playing in the fields, that a school should be the first object of our attention. This would open a wide sphere of usefulness for yourself, and any ladies you might influence to engage with you. What say you to this idea?

Lucy.—I have no objection to manage the young, provided I could procure teachers for them; but I fear they will continue ragged and dirty, and that I shall not like.

Cœlebs.—If we succeed in mending the morals of their parents, we shall perceive a wonderful change in the appearance of these children.

Lucy.—I am sorry you seem to have imbibed a dislike to our neighbours; 'tis true they are not of the genteel description to which we have been accustomed; but I received a favourable impression from the account given me by Mrs. Smith, the evening we spent at the Lion.

Cœlebs.—From the Landlady of an Inn.

what could she know of the society fit for you?

Lucy.—She seems a very intelligent woman, and, I imagine, has seen better days; for she is conversant with the fashionable world, and informed me several families here conducted their visits in a degree like those to which I have been accustomed. There is an Assembly too at ——, which is only three miles off; and the Races at the same place enliven the whole neighbourhood; besides the bustle which the Elections occasion, which, she says, are the most amusing things possible. And there are Election Balls.

Cœlebs.—My gossipping clerk has informed me of the birth, parentage, and education of Mrs. Smith, of the Lion. She lived servant in a family, where she became the mistress of the eldest son, a youth of high rank, who on his marriage was glad to get rid of her to James the footman, and they came to the Lion. After this information, you will not be very anxious to hold further conference with this specious pretender to better days—her present are certainly her best days.

Lucy.—I shan't believe all your clerk says, I don't like the look of him; and, perhaps, *his* birth, parentage, and education also, are not much more to his credit.

There are pauses in conversation occasioned by various causes. We are sometimes at a loss *what* to say, and sometimes *how* to say the thought even on our lip: we are sometimes awed into reserve by the forbidding air of our companions; and sometimes timidly silent from a fear of offending. The two last circumstances occasioned a pause in our tete-a-tete. An air of asperity, I imagined, accompanied the sentiments which had dropped from my Lucy, which seemed to me as novel as it was unpleasing; and I feared an increase of the air, in replying as I could wish to the subject of Mrs Smith's information. Surely, thought I, it is not my unhappy fate to be deceived in the leading dispositions of my Lucy.

Methought the moon reflected a sickly beam on her fair countenance, in unison with the sickening sensation of my anxious heart, and suddenly wrapt herself in a dark flying cloud, as though she exclaimed, "I will shine only on *lovers!*" I arose, rang the bell of our apartment, and ordered lights, while in silent sadness I paced the floor till their arrival. In the mean while, Lucy struck out one of the sweet airs which had often enchanted me; but it enchanted me not at this moment.

for it seemed forced and ill timed. On the entrance of the candles, I essayed to change the current of my thoughts, by reaching a volume from my book-case. It chanced to be the first book of Lucan's Pharsalia, and I opened it at the famous speech of Cæsar to his army, exciting them to civil war, and read both that and the subsequent speech of Lælius, which put an end to the suspense of those who had yet some remaining feelings of patriotism; till I came to the solemn oath he addressed to the invader of his country to obey his orders, though it were to plunge his sword into the bowels of his parent, wife, or brother; to plunder the holy fanes of the gods, or set fire to their temples. I laid aside my book to moralize on the passage, and recommenced our dialogue.

Cœlebs.—I think this historic incident furnishes a solemn admonition to those turbulent spirits who love public contentions. The wise man says, "Who knoweth what a little fire kindleth?" And if great national divisions are productive of the horrors pictured by this oath of Lælius, (and that they are, the history of our civil wars exemplifies) in a less degree *all* violent party spirit has the same tendency, nay, sometimes the same effect.

I must therefore dissent from the opinion of Mrs. Smith, of the Lion, in viewing County Elections as the most amusing things possisible; for they are unavoidable civil broils, which we must endeavour wisely to manage, when we are unfortunately engaged in them. You speak, my dear, of an election Ball; surely you have no thoughts of being seen there. Indeed I should be sorry for you to be seen at any Ball—you have frequently heard my opinion of such entertainments.

Lucy.—I don't recollect your opinion on the subject, and I have formed my own. I shall be a subscriber to the Assembly at ——, unless you forbid me.

Cœlebs.—I will not owe to compulsion what I expect from love. My Lucy will not act contrary to my wishes.

Lucy.—You are an artful lawgiver: Well, I'll not subscribe *this* year.

Cœlebs.—Well resolved; and in the course of it, I have little doubt of effecting a change in your views of the subject.

Lucy introduced her netting apparatus, and my good humour was again restored, as I reflected on the concession she had made to my wishes; and I sat admiring the display her employment afforded of her taper fingers,

and elegantly formed arm. "Your netting," said I, "reminds me of the labours of us logicians, for we go round and round in our arguments, meeting at the same point, yet flying off again, as unwilling to agree, and yield the contest; and ever and anon, we tie some intricate knot, in the hope no successor will unravel it; for we scholars had rather make difficulties than solve them."

Lucy.—Your work then is less important than mine, for mine is destined to some use.

Cœlebs.—The scholar's head and our purses, are too often a Pandora's box; but I do not mean to cast the reflection on the one in view; I trust it will be open only to the proper uses of the family, and the relief of honest poverty. Your sex has one great advantage over ours; for while we are wasting our hours in vain amusings, or flourishing our pens to no needful purpose, you have your needles ever at command, by the exercise of which, you may clothe the naked, and become the Dorcases of your age. What a zest will it yield to my pleasure, while reading in the dreary winter evening, either to myself or my Lucy, to cast an eye over her, and perhaps some fair neighbour so employed. Such was the employment of the W—— family, each

delightful evening I passed with them; and now I mention that family, it reminds me of my promise to read you Miss W.'s letter, which contains the interesting detail of her father's joyful exit from this state of sorrow: I delight in perusing and re-perusing it.

Lucy.—I wish you would defer the reading it to another opportunity. You have told me the contents of the letter, and I cannot think it a pleasant theme to dwell upon, especially of an evening. I shall dream of death if I hear so much about it.

Cœlebs—Nay, you mistake the effects the epistle would produce, for well says the poet—

> "Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth
> Our rugged pass to death, to break those bars
> Of terror and abhorrence nature throws
> 'Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
> Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm."

But I will not read the letter if you are averse to hearing it. Shall I resume the Roman poet?

Lucy.—What you read before out of him was dull enough; but do as you please.

Now it frequently happens, that we offend each other even in following the very counsel we receive *from* each other. The lover in a fit of jealousy or despondency, begs his mis-

tress to forget him, yet secretly rejoices to read in her countenance an impossibility of her compliance with his request; and the impatient heir vexes to behold his gouty uncle apply the precept he so often gives, to "take care of himself." Thus it was in the present case; for no sooner had Lucy announced her permission for me to please myself, than I pursued my inclinations, which led me to enjoy the beauties of my author alone; but I had not proceeded through many pages, before I was interrupted by sobs, breaking forth from the heart of my companion, and instantly penetrating my own. Alarmed for her health, I anxiously enquired the cause, and received for answer—"Cruel Cœlebs, I could not have imagined such unkindness." Still more amazed, I asked what I had done; and amidst broken sentences and tears, I learnt that my doing as I was desired, that is, *pleasing myself*, was accounted disrespectful and affronting. The fire of my naturally irritable spirit was enkindled by this unexpected weak and capricious conduct in my Lucy; and closing my book, and leaning my arms on the table, I gazed in her panting face, and exclaimed, "Begin, my love, some animating theme of discourse, display the depth of your information, the bril-

liancy of your wit, and the lively glowings of your fancy, then shall Roman and Grecian eloquence bow at your shrine, and your Cœlebs disdain to please himself by the perusal of poets and historians when in your company!

Ah, how often had I read the admonition of the wise man,—"a soft answer turneth away wrath;" and how often did I *intend* to exhibit in my public addresses the mild graces of patience and meekness: had I practised the lesson I meant to teach, on the present occasion, I should have been spared the heart-rending knowledge, that my Lucy could be angry without bounds when justly provoked, as she had proved she could be moderately so, when justice could not be pleaded in mitigation. Alarmed at the first fit of passion I had ever seen exercised by her against myself, (for it must be confessed I was not ignorant of a few excited by opposition to her will by her mother, and on which occasions I always thought Lucy right) I changed my satirical air into a soothing one, and succeeded in restoring a sullen composure, which lasted through the supper hour. I had great apprehensions that the warmth of our altercation had exposed us to the ears of my domestic, and it excited a painful sensation when

I entered on the duties of the family devotion. That master who would enjoy pleasure in offering up prayers before his servants, must be careful to maintain circumspection of conduct.

It is happily the case, that the evil tempers of our nature, as they vary in degrees, so they differ in qualities—the passionate are seldom vindictive. I had the pleasure of seeing the cloud of the evening dispersed from my Lucy's countenance on the following morning, and I only sighed that the waters of Lethe existed only in the poet's imagination. I walked forth in tolerable spirits to enjoy a solitary ramble, and in the hope of salutary effects on my still somewhat agitated feelings. Passing the Lion, I observed one of my female servants with two books in her hand coming out of the inn, which, the moment she perceived me, she endeavoured to hide under her apron. Nothing excites in the mind of a literary person more curiosity than a closed volume; but in this instance, I was stimulated by the laudable interest I felt for the morals of my servant, for it instantly occurred to me, that the said volumes might be novels of a pernicious tendency. "Mary," said I, "What books are those?" Mary coloured

at the question, as she replied, "Books, Sir; did you see any books in my hand?" "Certainly," returned I, "and I wish to see them again." She produced them, and I read their titles—"The Sorrows of Werter," and "Juvenile Indiscretions." "You must give me these books, Mary," said I, "to peruse first, for I do not like my servants to read what I am unacquainted with." The girl civilly acquiesced, and so far all seemed well. I retired into an unfrequented path, and hastily ran over the contents of the volumes. In the first, I found a description of an illicit love, and a defence of suicide; and in the other, *guilt* palliated under the term *indiscretion.*

After some reflection on the plan best to pursue, I proceeded with the books to the Lion, with the intention of asking Mrs. Smith, the Landlady, what she knew of them. I happily found her disengaged in her bar. "Mrs. Smith," said I, "are you acquainted with my servants?" "We give one another the time of the day, Sir, and I hope no offence in that," returned Mrs. Smith. "None in the least," replied I, "but my servant has been given more than the time of the day this morning, for she has brought out of your house two books, which I will venture to pro;

nounce are no credit to any house, from their immoral tendency. Now I have brought them back, and wish to ask you if you know how she received them?"

Mrs. Smith drew herself up, and began to expatiate on the well-known credit of her house, and every thing which proceeded from it: but I informed her, that had nothing to do with the question, which I wished her simply to answer, how my servant came in possession of these books. Mrs. Smith then took another method of evading the question, by saying, she had not set eyes on the books, nor indeed ever troubled herself about such things; perhaps some of her servants might have given them to the girl. I begged her to interrogate them, and she withdrew for the purpose; but no sooner was she gone, than her husband came into the bar. "Sir," said he, "I have heard what has passed between you and my wife, and I will tell you the truth, because I think you ought to know it, and I'm sure she will not, for she is one of the wonderful women who can keep a secret. You must know then, Sir, that Madam, your lady that is to be, called here last week, and said to my wife, that she would order books from a library in the next town to be left here, and would

send for them, because she knew you would not consent to her reading novels, and that the matter must be kept secret, which my wife engaged it should. I told her she did wrong: but I must hush, for I hear her coming—for heaven's sake, Sir, don't let her know I have told you."

I had but just time to promise obedience, when Mrs. S. returned, her husband retreating unseen by her, from another door. She informed me that all her servants denied any knowledge of the books, but that a young girl, who was not at home at present, and who occasionally came on errands to her house, probably might be the person who gave them to my servant. With this representation I appeared satisfied, and hastily withdrew from the spot in which a dagger had been planted in my heart. The *frivolity*, the *imprudence*, the *duplicity* of my Lucy, opened at once on my view, and I was overwhelmed with the association of fears excited. With hasty steps I once more gained my habitation, and retired to my study: but the privileges, the employments, and the duties of the study, were alike unknown to my distracted mind at this season. I could only vent my feelings in soliloquy and sighs—"Ah! Cœlebs, thou art deceived!" I exclaimed,

"and deceived where it was of the utmost importance thou shouldest *not* have been deceived. Farewell the expected joys of wedded life!"

Agonized by a series of similar reflections, I sat till the summons for dinner reached me before I had formed any scheme for the disclosure of my wounded spirit to the object who had inflicted the wound. And now, assured of the tenderest sympathy from the majority of my readers, I close my communications, with the intention of resuming a narration of one of the most interesting events in my life, in the next volume.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.